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**The construction of group ecological identity: a case study of communities
in Hout Bay, South Africa**

by

Ann Trevenen-Jones BSc, MSc

Thesis submitted to the Open University in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Discipline: Science

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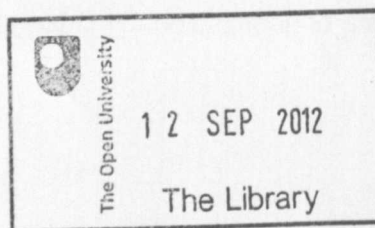
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Abstract

The interactions between people and their environments have been of interest to writers and academics from different disciplines for many years. Understanding how identity is linked to environment at a group level, such as local communities, has increasingly become more topical. This research aims to further our understanding by focussing on how groups experience, interpret and define themselves in respect of their environment. In seeking to make sense of how group ecological identities are constructed, the research questions of this study focus on: understanding how environment is understood and used by groups in the construction of their ecological identity; identifying key factors that influence group ecological identity; and exploring how groups maintain and/or redefine themselves in a changing environment and in a changing political landscape.

This research is framed by an interpretivist constructionist perspective, holding to the view that identity is informed by notions of self and the experience of being in the world. A case study of Hout Bay, Cape Town (South Africa) - particularly three key residential communities: the Cape Coloured Harbour, Valley and Imizamo Yethu communities - was undertaken. A qualitative methodology was adopted throughout the research design. A pilot study, involving eight participants from the Harbour and Valley communities, was conducted in 2002. Semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups were used to explore the research context, refine the research questions and to evaluate different data collection and analytical methods. Informed by the experiences of the pilot study, six main study focus groups (two per community), comprising a total of 36 people, were conducted in Hout Bay, between 2004 and 2005. Data analysis broadly focused on the stories groups told about themselves and the environment.



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The findings reveal that the communities' focus groups define themselves and others ecologically, in the course of their existence within the environment. Environment is interpreted by groups as more than their surroundings; it is about being emotionally and ecologically embedded in an ecological space that encompasses groups' social existence. Groups' interpret this ecological space as being about their perceptual engagement and experience of complex webs of social as well as human-non-human and non-human-non-human relations. Living in and as part of the environment, according to the groups, is informed by a sense of a moral way of being, closely linked to the groups' perceived 'right' and 'wrong' ways of how 'to be' ecological.

Six key factors which shape the way groups construct their ecological identity were identified. These relate to the way groups: define environment and nature; experience and interpret shared early formative environments; identify with a particular community; are ecologically knowledgeable and skilful; pursue different understandings of a good life; and make sense of ecological risk. Similarities and differences between groups are evident and explored. This is especially revealed as groups' ecological identity constructions play out in a dynamic between different groups' pursuit of their desired good life and identities and their attempts to make sense of, and manage, ecological risk.

The findings also reveal that the groups' constructions often draw on wider social and ecological stories in circulation within their communities and South Africa. In doing so, traditional and modern as well as political – colonial-apartheid and democratic - ways of dwelling and knowing themselves and others in an ecological space are revealed. The groups are consistent in displaying an on-going need to make sense of themselves and their surrounds in terms of belonging ecologically as well as socially. In making coherent their past, present and imagined future, groups' identity constructions reflect a mix of

positive, negative and ambivalent experiences of who they (and others) were, are and could be.

These findings challenge the familiar understanding of groups as socially defined - widening the exploration of how groups define themselves and engage from a social to an ecological perspective. Further research needs to be undertaken in respect of understanding how groups define and engage socially and how this shapes and is shaped by their ecological engagement, experience and interpretation. This includes studying intra and intergroup dynamics.

Acknowledgements

My deep appreciation to the people of Hout Bay who generously and often bravely participated in this study. I would also like to thank my supervisors, Joan Solomon (posthumous), Jeff Thomas and Kevin Collins for their enduring guidance. A special thank-you to my husband, Andrew Jones, who has always believed in me; and gratitude to my son, Troy who has lived his entire life, to date, with mummy and her thesis. My thanks also to my daughter Faye, my mother, Joanmariae Fubbs, friends Ingrid Rossouw and Edda Pohlandt Buttle as well as those other treasured family members and friends who were so supportive.

Ann Trevenen-Jones

Hout Bay

December 2011

Abbreviations, acronyms and select translations

ANC	African National Congress
CPNP	Cape Peninsular National Park
DAG	Development Action Group
MPA	Marine Protected Area
SIT/SCT	Social Identity Theory/ Social Categorization Theory
SoeR	State of the environment report
VOC	Vereinigde Oostindische Compagnie - Dutch East India Trading Company

Focus Groups:

HFG1/HFG2	Harbour Focus Group 1 and/or 2
IYFG1/IYFG2/VFG1/VFG2	Imizamo Yethu Focus Group 1 and/or 2 Valley Focus Group 1 and/or 2

Select translations:

Eerste/Tweede Strand (Afrikaans)	First/ Second Beach
Fynbos (Afrikaans)	Small fine leaved bush
Ja/Nee (Afrikaans)	Yes/ No
uBaba (Xhosa)	Father. Also a widely used cultural term of respect for certain, often older, men

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1. Hout Bay, a South African study context

1.1 Introduction

This study was interested in the ways different communities perceive environment and how they interpret themselves in respect of the environment. South Africa has a diversity of communities and a political history in which wide-ranging identities were determined. Presently, the prevailing political circumstance facilitates dramatic changes, including freedoms for communities and individuals to decide who, how and where to be. In particular, Hout Bay, offers a South African context, where a few diverse communities live in close proximity to one another, in a relatively geographically bounded area. It is a largely rural setting which is been increasingly developed. This settlement is an area of widely recognised natural beauty. The human and non-human environment is especially evident on a daily basis. As such, Hout Bay provided a rich South African context in which to locate a study of how communities define themselves in respect of the environment.

Chapter 1 briefly introduces South Africa and specifically Hout Bay as a study context. I also draw attention to how I orientate myself in the study as a researcher and as a resident of Hout Bay. In closing, subsequent chapters of this thesis are outlined.

1.2 Identity and dwelling in South Africa

South Africa has a colonial and apartheid history of politically directed identities, socio-economic interaction and spatial settlement on the basis of race-ethnicity. Although race is often used in the literature in this thesis I use the term ethnicity as it encompasses race and culture which together were central to apartheid policy. The advent of democratic government in 1994 marked a significant political change. Most pertinent to this research are the political freedoms (and respect) which enable communities and individuals to determine who they are, what they can aspire to, and how and where they dwell. Also of interest is the persistence or evidence of past political restrictions and directions in terms

of how people define/ed themselves, dwell and experience themselves and others – socially and spatially.

Apartheid takes its meaning of 'apart' or 'separateness' from the Afrikaans language. The apartheid policy was associated with the rule of the National Party which governed South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s. The Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950) was one of several legal interpretations of apartheid, which built on the earlier colonial Native Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) and the subsequent Natives Laws Amendment Act (No. 54 of 1952). The Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950) was designed to implement the segregation policy and in so doing facilitated the forced, physical separation of communities on the basis of ethnicity. Significantly, Bickford-Smith (2001: 15) mentions that forced removals of people of colour from their chosen residential areas occurred as far back as the colonial period when, for example, in 1901, Africans were relocated from District Six (Cape Town).

These colonial and apartheid acts effectively controlled movement, residence and land ownership of non-whites. Black South Africans could not own land and the Native acts facilitated transfers of former Black owned land to White South Africans. A consequence of which was that the White minority population was given the right to 87 per cent of South Africa's land whilst the majority Black population was allocated 13 per cent of the land (Barber, 1999: 174). This 13 per cent was distributed throughout South Africa in the form of Native reserves or Bantustans which were later referred to as Homelands (Barber, 1999: 174). Ten self governing Homelands, located throughout South Africa, were established through the Bantu Authorities Act (No. 68 of 1951). In December 1993, on the eve of democratic elections, the Homelands were legally reincorporated into South Africa and South African citizenship restored and extended to their residents/citizens (Barber, 1999: 299).

In addition to knowing people by their tribal association, for example, as Xhosas or Zulus, apartheid directed that people be classified as, Whites, Black Africans (Bantu), Coloureds and Asians - as in the Population Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950) - (see also Barber, 1999: 174-175). Coloureds from the Cape were and are typically known as Cape Coloured (also recognised by the identity numbers provided as per the Population Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950). As Brown (2000) notes, much of the Coloured population, people of 'mixed' descent, were from the Cape where they 'originated' from relations between Dutch settlers, Khoikhoi and San people (2000: 198-199). Even so, Brown (2000: 198) declares the Coloured classification unsatisfactory, even with respect to the present-day usage, noting such people should be termed either African or European. Cape Coloureds are also said via descent to 'unite' most of South Africa's White, Black, Indian and East Asian (Malay) populations (Welsh, 2000: xix, xx and 35). South Africa's democratic government and its Constitution (1996) are committed to the equitable recognition of all peoples and ethnicities. Nevertheless, in present day South Africa racial categories remain in technical use, for example, Statistics South Africa (2003) identifies the following population categories in their research: Black African, Indian, Coloured and White – where the first three categories broadly fall under Black.

Identities are most salient in crises, when that which was assumed to be 'coherent and stable' becomes through experience 'doubtful and uncertain' (Mercer, 1990: 43). Calhoun's (1994) observations resonate with this claim in his exploration of the politics of identity and social theory. For Calhoun, modern dwelling has placed a stress on identity associated with moral weight and understanding of who we are (1994: 9-10). He asserts that it is harder, than in the past, for people to,

"establish who we are and maintain this own identity satisfactorily in our lives and in the recognition of others" (Calhoun, 1994: 10)

The study described in the following pages was conducted between 2004 and 2005 (with a pilot study in 2002), at a time of recent political change from apartheid to democratic governance. This was at a time when identities and dwelling were becoming less certain and unfamiliar. A fundamental political change was facilitated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), especially the recognition of the rights of all people and its enshrinement of democratic values notably 'human dignity, equality and freedom', including the right to a safe and healthy environment, adequate housing, health care and sufficient food and water (see Constitution, 1996, Chapter 2, Sections 7(1) 24, 26, 27). The constitutional emphasis on human rights, with its recognition of the need to manage the environment sustainably for the health of present and future human generations, adds a further dimension to this study. It was also a time when South Africa was becoming more modern in its development and socio-economic relations (Arnold, 2005). This was because of its past political and consequent socio-economic isolation, and the consequent opening up of global relations as well as in significant part the undertaking by the public sector to address the imbalances of apartheid's spatial and socio-economic development (Arnold, 2005) – (see also Constitution, 1996). It was therefore a time of critical change in South Africa.

South Africa's developmental state orientated policy is informed by the government's fundamental policy priorities (values) of poverty alleviation and economic development (Poon, 2009; Gumede, 2011). Its commitment to sustainable development is further informed by the World Commission on Environment and Development's well known definition of sustainable development,

"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (1987: 19).

These interpretations of sustainable development underscore a value bias towards humans and their needs in ecological relationships. At the same time, an anthropocentric

perspective, a sense of responsibility, of caring for or stewardship of the non-human environment prevails.

Identity is especially topical in South Africa with its history of identity and dwelling politics (MacDonald, 2006). Alexander (2006) and Nuttall and Michael (2000) assert that presently South Africans are seeking to discover, to imagine and re-interpret who they are. Seekings and Nattrass's (2005) review of South African incomes in 2004 found that income distribution was more skewed than under apartheid rule. Their review of democratically governed South Africa purports that South Africans are seeking to define themselves in new ways, beyond race to multicultural expressions of class. I am, however, mindful of the quandary Chipkin poses in his consideration of whether in their diversity South Africans have a national identity, because,

“the political transition from apartheid to democracy keeps running up against the substance of ‘the people’. In the absence of any traditional unifying principles (of language, culture, religion, race and so on), the identity of South Africans is elusive” (Chipkin, 2007: 189).

This research is not focused on national identity. However, Chipkin's (2007) argument poses a caution to appreciate identity, plurality and particularly, with respect to diversity in South Africa.

1.3 The diversity and particularity of Hout Bay

Hout Bay is located on the Cape Peninsula (South Africa), approximately 20km west of the capital of the Western Cape province, Cape Town and its well known landmark, Table Mountain (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Hout Bay falls under the municipal governance of the City of Cape Town. It has a social and geographical boundedness, defining it as a distinctive area within the wider City of Cape Town surrounds in South Africa (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

The name 'Hout Bay' was derived from the Dutch, 'Houtbaaitjen', meaning 'bay of wood' (Westby-Nunn, 2005: 10). This underscored the then Dutch colonists' valuation of Hout Bay's natural forests as a resource for timber. Hout Bay has been home to the hunter-gathers, the Xhosi-San, British and Dutch colonists, and South African ethnic community settlements as directed under apartheid government and later under democratic government (Westby-Nunn, 2005). Over time, the everyday experience of 'the village' and/or the 'Republic of Hout Bay' – as Hout Bay was and is often referred to by residents – has shifted with changing natural resource utility and activities. These include social and hedonistic activities. For example: Hout Bay was once a sustenance outpost providing fresh produce such as cauliflowers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, as well as grain, salted fish and timber to the Dutch East India Trading Company (VOC) a trading entity, and its ships which sailed to and from the East (Welsh, 2000: 30; Westby-Nunn, 2005). It subsequently developed into a residential village where fishing industries predominated and some farming continued (Westby-Nunn, 2005). Today Hout Bay is an aesthetically valued, desirable residential seaside 'village' with few agricultural valley plots. Commercial fishing activities continue alongside development, recreational, tourism and marine, coastal and Cape Peninsular National Park related activities (Oelofse 1994: 2; Westby-Nunn, 2005), (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4).

Hout Bay's population has grown from approximately 2000 people in 1950 (Greene, 1991) to 21 843 people as reported by Statistics South Africa drawing on the data from the last national census which was conducted in 2001 (City of Cape Town, 2003a, 2003b). There is some contention as to the population of the rapidly expanding informal settlement, Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay. Estimates of around 16 000 to 18 000 residents in Imizamo Yethu are often cited, as for example, in the local community newspaper, 'Sentinel' (Lilford, 2004: 3). However, the Development Action Group (DAG) estimated that there

Figure 1.1: Sketch map of Hout Bay showing approximate spatial and locally perceived residential locations of the Harbour, Valley and Imizamo Yethu communities

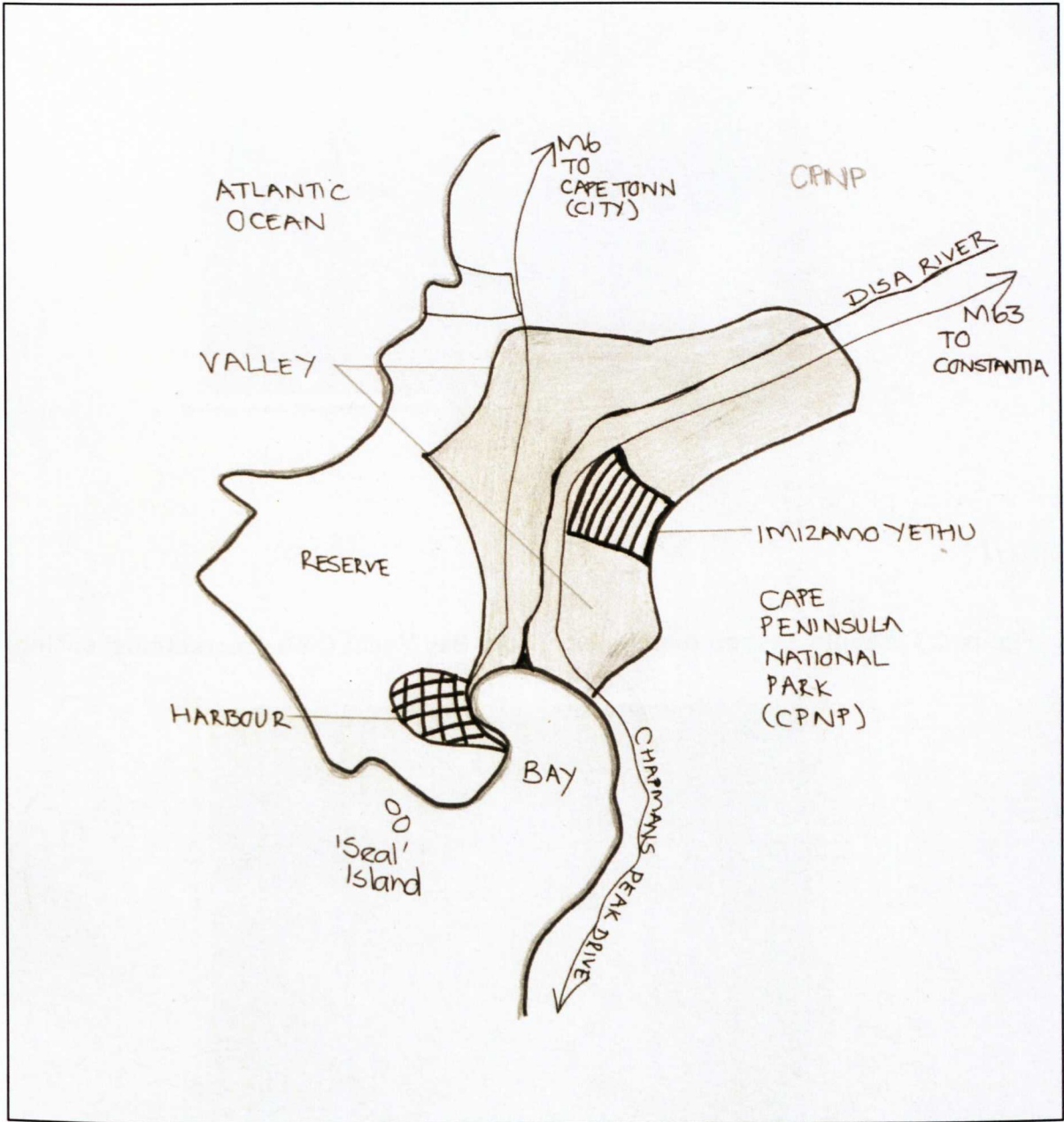


Figure 1.2: Aerial photograph of Hout Bay



Figure 1.3: Yachts anchored in the bay (Hout Bay Yacht Club - recreational sailing)

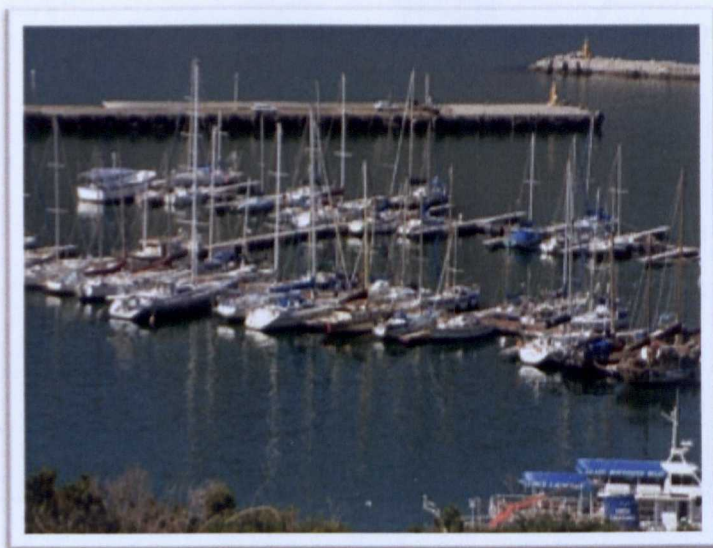


Figure 1.4: View of commercial fishing harbour area with fishing boats and processing factories



Figure 1.5 Hout Bay main beach

Photograph taken from Harbour surrounds looking across to part of Valley surrounds



Figure 1.6: Fynbos populated landscape



Figure 1.7: Disa River and wetland in the Valley (summer)



Figure: 1.8: Seal' Island (local name) with resident population of Cape fur seals



were only 7874 Imizamo Yethu residents (2003: 15). Population is of interest to this study in that it illustrates the increasing settlement in Hout Bay. As especially evidenced by the growing informal settlement, it also reflects the diversification of where different communities have chosen to settle as they have become increasingly politically free from apartheid social and spatial direction. However, Sowman and Gawith (1994) note in their study of disadvantaged communities' participation in development planning in Hout Bay that under apartheid such communities were excluded and presently still did not fully participate in critical development processes.

Hout Bay can be considered a microcosm of South Africa in its diversity and particularity. It presents highly visible and tangible everyday opportunities to experience a diverse and unique non-human, natural and human environment.

1.3.1 Natural surroundings

Hout Bay has a widely appreciated aesthetic and biodiverse natural environmental splendour, such as the surrounding mountains, wetland valley and sea, as well as a unique fynbos (small fine leaf bushes) biodiversity. It is almost entirely surrounded by the

Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP), with its species rich, habitat-abundant fynbos ecosystem (Jacana, 1998; Cowling & Richardson, 1995). Fynbos are a significant part of the Cape Floral Kingdom - the smallest and most species diverse of the world's six floral kingdoms (Jacana, 1998: 57-58). It is characterised by a tight web of flora and fauna (Jacana, 1998: 58). The CPNP is said to have more than 5780 fynbos endemic floral species - out of a total 8500 fynbos floral species (Jacana, 1998: 58). Notably, many fynbos species rely on fire to germinate, including Proteas; and fire is considered a regular event in the hot, dry summer climate cycle (Jacana, 1998: 62). The Atlantic Ocean provides another boundary, largely in the form of a bay. Watching dolphins, whales and the local Cape fur seal population, in the bay and surrounds are popular local and tourist pastimes. The Atlantic Ocean in the vicinity of Hout Bay includes a South African designated Marine Protected Area known for its crayfish (rock lobster) stocks and other marine life. (See Figures 1.5-1.8)

1.3.2 Social space

Hout Bay is a seaside village with an ethnically diverse human community settlement. Under apartheid rule it was designated a white residential area with an area above the harbour designated for Cape Coloured residents (Oelofse, 1994: 2). Presently, residents are widely regarded as broadly divided into three communities namely the Cape Coloured Harbour Fishing community, the affluent Valley (mostly White) community and the Black African Informal Settlement community, known as Imizamo Yethu (see Figure 1.1). In this study I tend to refer to these communities as Harbour, Valley and Imizamo Yethu.

These communities largely continue to reside in locations reminiscent of apartheid's social and spatial development policy. Under apartheid, many of Hout Bay's early Coloured community residents were forcibly moved from their homes in the Valley to the demarcated area above the harbour, where they continue to reside - although some

Coloureds squatted in the Valley (Oelofse, 1994: 6). Unlike the Coloured residents, Black people, who were similarly used as a cheap source of labour during the apartheid era, were not legally permitted to settle in Hout Bay (Greene, 1991). For work purposes they were given permission to dwell, temporarily, in hostels (as was the case in Hout Bay for a few Black fishermen – (Greene, 1991)) or similar dwellings. As noted earlier, Black people could only legally live permanently in one of the ten Homelands. The two Xhosa tribal Homelands, namely the Transkei and Ciskei, are located in the Eastern Cape Province. This has great relevance to the informal Xhosa settlers who migrated to and settled in Hout Bay in recent years – including the late apartheid rule period (Greene, 1991; Ballantyne & Oelofse, 1999: 207; Monaco, 2008: 127; Harte, Childs & Hastings, 2009: 146).

However, the increasing influx of informal and/or non-white settlers into Hout Bay, reflects a social space undergoing a significant transformation. This also concerns the socio-economic dwelling relations between Hout Bay's different communities. There is a correlation, influenced by South Africa's political history, between communities and their socio-economic status and relationships. Although this is changing, it can be said that the Valley residents are affluent whilst the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu communities are considerably less well off (Development Action Group, 2003; Erasmus, Mans & Jacobs, 2005). According to the Development Action Group (2003: 19, 31), many Black Africans and Coloured residents work in White and/or Valley residences as housekeepers and gardeners as well as in the local fishing industry.

- *Harbour community*

This community is considered to be the oldest present day community resident in Hout Bay. The community lives in the Harbour area above the commercial fishing harbour, on the slopes of the Hangberg, a mountain looking onto Chapmans Peak Drive and the bay

(see Figure 1.1). As Figures 1.9 and 1.10 illustrate, accommodations in the Harbour have diversified to include the original fishing company properties, small brick and concrete dwellings and informal settlement type dwellings. Prior to forced removals, this community lived throughout the Valley and Harbour areas. Many members resided near their place of work - on farms and in marine companies, such as Sea Products. They also were concentrated in extended family dwelling groups in homes in the Valley area around the Disa river mouth and St Peter's Church (Greene, 1991). Historically, community members' livelihoods were tied to the local fishing industry (Greene, 1991; Westby-Nunn, 2005).

- *Valley community*

The Valley community largely occupy the residential area that spreads along the valley and upwards onto the lower mountain slopes including those in the CPNP (see Figures 1.1, 1.11 and 1.12). As the suburb information unpacked from Statistics South Africa's 1996 and 2001 national censuses illustrates, the White population has increased over this period, suggesting at least some measure of migration to Hout Bay and settlement (City of Cape Town, 2003a). Today, many Valley residents only reside in Hout Bay, but historically several were instrumental in the development of Hout Bay. Four prominent and historically rooted Valley families are: the Trautman, Dorman, Barberton and Skaife families. The Trautman and Dorman families owned large tracts of land, some of which was sold and developed for residential and commercial purposes. The Trautman family is also considered as having been influential in developing the local fishing industry and fishing practices. The Barberton and Skaife families are associated with conservation efforts. Such efforts are marked by a bronze Leopard sculpture which stands on a rock peering over Hout Bay's main beach as a reminder of the wildlife that once roamed about Hout Bay (Westby-Nunn, 2005).

- *Imizamo Yethu community*

Imizamo Yethu is an informal settlement which, in the past was frequently referred to as Mandela Park and is sometimes still referred to as such. The term 'informal settlement' is commonly accepted and widely used in South Africa, including by political parties and in the media. It is used to refer to unplanned and typically opportunistic human settlement. It is characterised by informal dwellings and typically a lack of a formal potable water supply, proper sanitation, electricity service and other such basic settlement services. Notably, the South African government is committed to the eradication of informal settlements and the realisation of sustainable, serviced human settlements (Department of Housing, 2005). Imizamo Yethu is also referred to in some literature as, Mizamoyethu (Oelofse, 1994; Ballantyne & Oelofse, 1999). It is situated on the mountain slopes above Main road and the local cemetery and borders the municipal forestry station and the reservoir pipe line (see Figures 1.1, 1.13 and 1.14). Imizamo Yethu has a significant Xhosa population (Monaco, 2008: 127; Harte *et al.*, 2009: 146). The settlement is characterised by shacks which are constructed primarily from corrugated iron, timber boards, plywood and plastic sheeting (see Figure 1.14). However, a few brick houses have been built through government and private initiatives.

Imizamo Yethu is translated as 'through collective struggle' (Oelofse, 1994:170) or 'collective effort' (Westby-Nunn, 2005: 108), suggesting an assertion of a particularly meaningful dwelling social identity. This notion of collectivity, or togetherness, is unsurprising if one considers the strong collective relationship evident in traditional Xhosa communities. The name might also be an expression of the perceived security and competitive value of being a group, given the highly insecure tenure experience of informal settlers in Hout Bay. Harte *et al.*'s (2009) geographical study of vulnerability and resilience of the Imizamo Yethu community to fire hazard underscores the value of strong Xhosa relations and the safety value offered by a social group. According to Harte *et al.*

(2009), the Imizamo Yethu Xhosa residents' cultural beliefs critically influence social cohesion and social capital, which in turn contributes towards their collective social resilience to the fire hazard.

The Imizamo Yethu community continues to be the subject of contentious discourses as expressed by Hout Bay's longer term residents, the Harbour and Valley communities (Oelofse, 1994). Even within Imizamo Yethu there are those who claim that they have a more legitimate right of tenure compared to other informal settlers (Lilford, 2002: 3; 2004: 3). This contention arose in part because of claims by those who had settled in Hout Bay prior to 1994 (Lilford, 2004: 3). Greene (1991) and Oelofse (1994: 6) in their studies of Hout Bay both acknowledge the presence of a few Black 'economic opportunity' squatters, prior to 1987, who were largely employed by the fishing industry. Squatting continued unabated in Hout Bay, despite legislation aimed at preventing it, for example the Illegal Squatting Act No. 52 of 1951 (as amended in 1989) (Oelofse, 1994: 164). Between 1988 and 1989, it was reported that two 'squatter' settlements, were established on state and private land along

Figure 1.9: The Harbour residential area

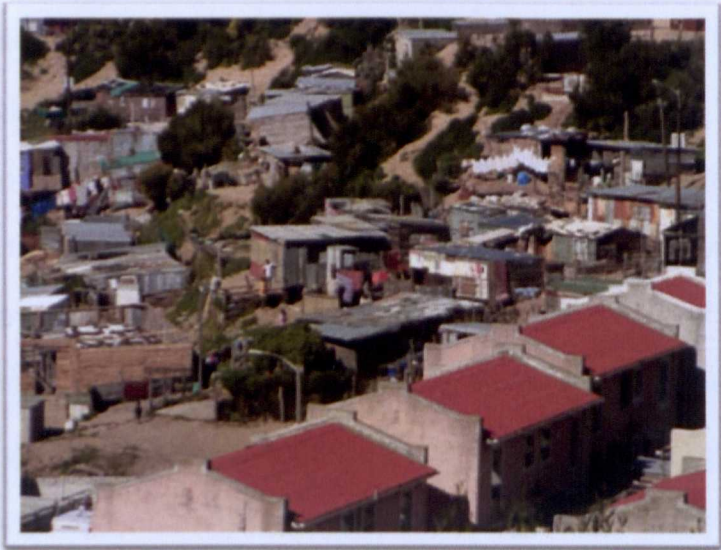


Figure 1.10: Formal and informal homes in the Harbour



Figure 1.11: Valley community – view across the Valley of gated townhouse style residences, open and gated freestanding homes, pockets of forests and the mountains in the CPNP



Figure 1.12: View of the Valley community residential area looking onto the bay, Chapmans Peak Drive and part of the CPNP



Figure 1.13: View of Imizamo Yethu (2002)
(arrows point to Imizamo Yethu)

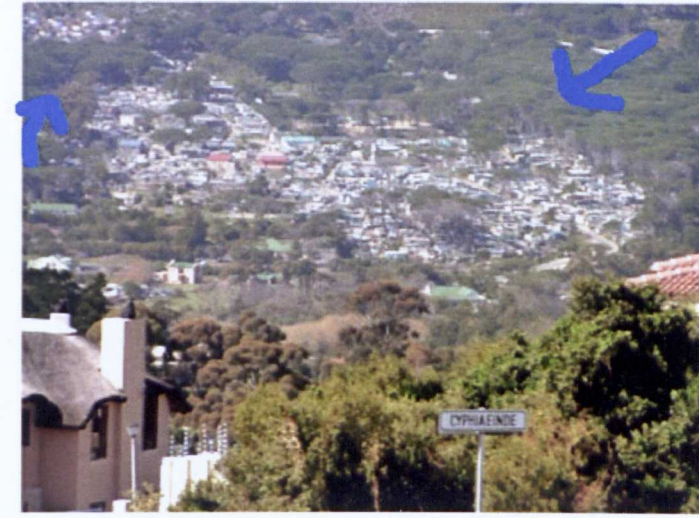


Figure 1.14: Informal dwellings in Imizamo Yethu (2002)



Princess Beach road (Princess Bush and Sea Products settlements – near the bay) with a third 'squatter' settlement near to the Oakhurst area of the Disa river (Blue Valley settlement) (Oelofse, 1994: 6 and 165-166). In the early 1990s, the Hout Bay Ratepayers Association, in conjunction with the then local authority and the squatters, formally recognised approximately 1800 squatters who were relocated to what is now known as Imizamo Yethu (Greene, 1991; Oelofse, 1994: 7-8). Additionally, the widely perceived unabated influx into Imizamo Yethu is seen as the cause of over-densification there (Lilford, 2004: 3). Froestad (2005) also observes that various environmentally unhealthy conditions of significance to human wellbeing prevail in Imizamo Yethu (see Section 1.3.3); as noted earlier Harte *et al.* (2009) declare that Imizamo Yethu is a community vulnerable to fire. It is in this vulnerable context that residents dwell in Imizamo Yethu.

1.3.3 Environmentally concerned communities

The environmental concerns of Hout Bay communities relate both to humans (social) and non-humans. They are especially focused on the relations between the two - although biased towards humans. Moreover, it is apparent that environment concerns are at the heart of communities discourses about who they are and who and what connotes the *other*. Concerns have varied in their prominence, endurance and topical attention. Examples are evident in the local community newspapers, the 'Sentinel' and 'The Coastal Chronicle'. A selection of articles and 'letters to the editor' in these newspapers, around the time of this study, can be found in Appendix 1. In brief, such articles and letters draw attention to, a) residents interest in councils' plans to identify further land for informal settlements in Hout Bay (Lilford, 2002: 3); b) concerns that changes in agricultural rezoning for development in Hout Bay will impact that Hout Bay's valued 'privilege' of 'open land' and 'rural atmosphere' (Anon, 2003:2); c) concerns that the 'administration and location' of Chapman's Peak toll road will pose an access barrier, affecting all of Hout Bay's communities, to the Cape Peninsular National Park and the picnic spots along the route (Hunter, 2003: 2); d) residents interest and concerns with the 'densely packed' Imizamo Yethu, land tenure tensions and housing development needs of Imizamo Yethu,

and the settlements vulnerability to fire (Anon, 2004a: 2; Baker, 2004: 2; Cochrane, 2004: 2; Lilford, 2003: 3; 2004: 3); and e) interest in sewage overflows from some of Hout Bay's local fishing industry factories (Anon, 2004b: 1).

Oelofse's (1994) community conflict study and Imagine Hout Bay study (Envirochild.com, 2004) of Hout Bay, underscore the Harbour, Valley and Imizamo Yethu communities' shared appreciation of Hout Bay as a desirable place to live. It is perceived as offering a quality lifestyle amidst valued aesthetically beautiful surroundings. These studies also draw attention to communities' expressed concerns. Although there are differences in intensity, form and extent of expression, the following summarised concerns can be said to have been expressed by communities in these studies. Communities are concerned about a) Hout Bay's growing population and their capacity to retain desired lifestyle standards and the beauty of their surroundings; b) crime; c) their perception of low level and variable quality basic service provision such as potable household water, sanitation and electricity. This is especially expressed by the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu communities; d) pollution and increased vulnerability of humans and non-humans health and safety; and e) the extent and/or lack of environmentally responsible development. This summation does not reflect the prioritisation order of concerns raised.

Froestad (2005: 333) asserts that there is a 'fundamental need' in present day South Africa to develop 'new relations of trust' between communities. This is based on his environmental health orientated observations in Hout Bay Bay (in particular Imizamo Yethu), such as 'irregular garbage collection' (2005: 334), 'insufficient toilet facilities' (2005: 334), widespread rubbish pollution (2005: 334) and the

"absence of a proper sewage system and insufficient supply of fresh water" (2005: 334),

which he claims are a consequence of a lack of trust and a continuation of past apartheid relations of domination and segmentation (Froestad, 2005). According to Froestad this situation is,

“becoming increasingly desperate and risky, for both the township’s inhabitants and the Hout Bay population at large” (2005: 334).

Despite apparent tensions within Hout Bay, it would be a mistake to think that these three different community groups are at loggerheads all the time and that the everyday being in the environment dynamic between groups is solely defined by the dynamics of the apartheid legacy and democracy. In my opinion, there are numerous ways and levels in which Hout Bay’s communities are seeking to define themselves within communities’ groups and between groups. However, one is mindful of Froestad’s (2005) earlier discussed observations as well as Dixon and Durrheim’s (2003) contact-based research of interracial groups engagement on a beach in democratically governed South Africa. Dixon and Durrheim found that different groups continue to ‘holiday together apart’ (2003: 19). They conclude that,

“in a society such as South Africa, it would be misguided to pretend that the past does not continue to define the present” (2003: 20).

On a broader contextual basis, with respect to the wider City of Cape Town surroundings, realist (and positivist) framed environmental studies have also been conducted, for example, the 1999-2005 State of the Environment Reports (SoeR). Such studies shed light on the scientific appraisal of the status of the Cape environment around 14 key themes, such as, air quality, water, economy, for example, the 2000 SoeR (Cape Town Metropolitan Council, 2001). Additionally, the City of Cape Town’s Coastal Water Quality Report of 2004 (2004) reported that high faecal coliforms levels were found in the Hout Bay beach surrounds. The 2004/2005 review of the coastal zone management and the coastal status (Environmental Resource Management Department, 2005: 3) noted that

inappropriate development – including of the Hout Bay coast – had the potential to increase erosion, it also negatively impacted on the ‘coastal sense of place’ and public access. This suggests there are government efforts to monitor and respond managerially to environmental issues, as well as findings concerning coastal pollution and development issues. Such concerns are echoed from a different position by Hout Bay communities and researchers, such as Froestad (2005).

1.4 Researcher and resident

My interest in this research stems from my valuation of my childhood experiences of the African bushveld and my professional work in development and environment in Southern Africa. Most especially, I have being intrigued by the complex relationship/s between development and environment policies, and their variable delivery successes, and peoples claimed identities, environmental values, behaviours and reflexive considerations thereof. My specific interest in Hout Bay arises because it is also where I live.

As the researcher in this study, my technical associations, my Valley community residency, my White ethnicity, female gender, age and home preference for the English language, all influence how I perceive and am perceived by all the Hout Bay communities.

1.5 Outline of thesis chapters

Together with this chapter, this thesis comprises eight chapters. The next chapter presents a review of select yet pertinent literature regarding environment and identity. This review orientates this research philosophically and focuses the literature review on the research interest, namely, groups’ constructions of their ecological identities. Key concepts such as environment, nature and identity are discussed. Chapter 2 closes with the presentation of research questions. These questions inform the methodological approach and method as described in Chapter 3. This Chapter describes the interpretivist, mild constructionist perspective adopted as well as the exploration, during the pilot study, of semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups as possible methods – either on

their own or combined. A description of the pilot study experience and lessons learnt are also presented. This chapter concludes with the description of the main study as reformulated from the experiences of the pilot study including the use of focus groups only as the means to generate data about groups' ecological identities, and the analytical narrative thematic content approach adopted.

Chapters 4-6 present the analysis of the three different communities' focus groups. These chapters close with an initial thematic comparison and contrast of the key findings of each pair of community focus groups within the three communities. In Chapter 7, all six community focus groups are compared and contrasted on a per focus group basis. The latter part of this chapter reviews the key findings in respect of the wider literature on environment and identity and reflects on its contribution to the understanding of ecological identity, specifically groups ecological identities. Throughout the thesis issues of validity, reliability and ethics are raised. The experiences of these issues during this study are reviewed in Chapter 8. Finally, in Chapter 8, a discussion of how and where the findings of this study can contribute to future ecological identity research is presented.

1.6 Conclusion

South Africa offers a rich context in which to locate a study interested in identity and environment because of its multicultural society, its history of politically imposed identities related to ethnic definitions, related political socio-economic and spatial segregation of different communities and its recent desegregation of communities and recognition of human rights for all. This study was conducted at a time of radical political change when people had emerged from a period of political turmoil, ethnic determination and spatial and socio-economic segregation. In contrast to the authoritarian apartheid rule, human rights for all are enshrined in the present day Constitution (1996). These include the recognition of the rights of all people to determine who they are as well as their rights to dignity, equality and basic dwelling conditions such as housing, water and a healthy and safe environment that is also developed with a view to the rights of future generations.

Such rights present opportunities and dilemmas in respect of how people choose to continue to define or redefine themselves, how and where they choose to dwell and in what ways and how environment is interpreted. Under such conditions, identity constructions and tacit meaning often become evident, especially salient and accessible.

Hout Bay is an especially attractive research context in this regard. Where and how its different ethnic communities dwell and define themselves is especially evident in spatial patterns, socio-economic engagements and statuses, and relations with the non-human part of the environment. There are reflections of past and present day political dwelling influences. There are also visible signs and awareness of human and non-human dwelling relations including the risk of fire and unsanitary conditions to people's wellbeing. Additionally Hout Bay is regarded in many respects as an aesthetic and biodiverse valued unique environment, not least because of its endemic fynbos flora and marine protected area, mountain and sea surrounds and central wetland valley. Hout Bay is a settlement with a unique non-human environment, that is also surrounded by an unique national park with mountains that essentially define it as a place on its own. Hout Bay communities experience themselves and their non-human surrounds on an everyday basis in a context where people from different communities interact daily and where the quality and extent of the non-human environment is especially perceptible in their everyday dwelling.

2. Environment and Identity

“...life is given in an engagement, not a disengagement, and in that very engagement the real world at once ceases to be ‘nature’ and is revealed to us as an environment for people. Environments are constituted in life, not just in thought, and it is only because we live in an environment that we can think at all” (Ingold, 2000: 60).

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced Hout Bay as the South African context in which this study of the construction of ecological identities by groups is situated. Such a study concerns notions of identity, at the group level, and of environment. In Chapter 2, these notions are explored within an interpretivist, constructionist framework. As such, groups’ interpretations of environment and of themselves in respect of the environment are of interest. As Ingold (2000: 60) notes above, people’s lived interpretations of their world are critical to the understanding of the environment. As a consequence of this, throughout my research, I have not assumed that there exists a static and/or universally held meaning of environment or the world.

The relationship between humans and the non-human environment has become increasingly topical, across a range of disciplines. These include, natural science, anthropology, sociology, psychology, human geography, law, politics and new age spiritualism. However an interest in identity and environment, Clayton and Opatow (2003: 2) purport, is only starting to attract a wider research interest. Additionally, Franklin (2002) contends that the conflation of nature and environment has biased research in favour of political, environmental and scientism agendas, at the expense of research into everyday life and understandings of the environment. In Chapter 2, I strive to contextualise this study’s research interest, within a review of the literature that is not comprehensive in respect of every aspect of identity and environmental scholarship, but which attempts to provide a thoughtful and focused critique of areas of particular relevance.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the philosophical orientation of this study within key ontological debates relating to beliefs about the reality of the environment. Some of the many interpretations of environment and/or nature are then reviewed. This is followed by a review of the way in which humans know themselves as a society in relation to the environment. Notions of identity - social and ecological identity - are then discussed, including mention of place and identity. Chapter 2 closes with a summation of the key ideas discussed and the presentation of the emerging research questions.

2.2 Philosophical orientation

2.2.1 An interpretivist social constructionist study

This study adopts an interpretivist social constructionist stance. Such studies aim to understand peoples' meanings of a 'situation or phenomena' (Merriam, 2002: 6). Williams declares that interpretivism is:

"those strategies in sociology which interpret the meanings and actions of actors according to their own subjective frame of reference" (2000: 210).

Such a stance is suited to a study such as this which is interested in groups' interpretations of themselves and of the environment. In particular, this study adopts a social constructionist perspective similar to Hannigan's (1995) 'mild constructionist' perspective. Hannigan's (1995) interest is in environmental problems and solutions. However, mild constructionism is applicable to any investigation of social reality. According to Hannigan, social constructionism appreciates that meaning is produced through,

"dynamic social process of definition, negotiation and legitimation" (1995: 31).

Hannigan, declares that the key focus of environmental sociology should be,

"understanding how claims about environmental conditions are assembled, presented and contested" (Hannigan, 1995: 187).

This study's philosophical orientation emphasises the importance it places on groups interpretations of themselves and the environment, enabling such expressions to emerge from what is arguably a natural engagement process, that is, where social selves contest, negotiate and legitimate meaning in the course of defining themselves as group members and defining their group/s. A discussion of social selves and groups can be found in Section 2.5.

2.2.2 Constructionism and realism: ontologically divided

A critical review of the literature suggests that a key and contentious division is the ontological divide between constructionist and realist studies of environment. Realist studies are framed by the belief that an independent, observable real world exists, with real ecological processes and entities as well as real environmental problems such as climate change, pollution, habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity and the over consumption of natural resources. Macnaghten and Urry (1998: 1) assert that environmental realism preferences 'unambiguous' as well as 'observable', 'rectifiable outcomes'. In contrast, constructionist studies are framed by the belief that meaning and the reality of the world are socially constructed. Constructionism can be said to range between what can be termed subtle idealism, where meaning is shared, and relativism, where no single meaning is shared, rather there are a series of alternate meanings (Snape & Spencer, 2003: 11-13). Macnaghten and Urry (1998: 1) contend that there are studies of nature framed by a 'doctrine' of environmental idealism which can 'coexist' with realism. They claim that environmental idealism emphasises the identification and exploration of people's values. Significantly, Macnaghten and Urry assert that these values are assumed to be 'underlying, stable and consistent' (1998: 1) interpretations of nature. Furthermore, Macnaghten and Urry (1998: 1-2) argue that realism and idealism as well as the evaluation of how people use the environment (instrumentalism) contribute to understanding how people live in the environment, while at the same time ignores, misrepresents and/or conceals knowledge.

Tensions between realists and constructionists are heightened in the field of sociology, environmental sociology and human geography. Yearley (1992: 186), an environmental constructionist, aptly states that knowledge of the environment is 'socially assembled'. In contrast, realist advocates Catton and Dunlap (1978, 1994) believe that environmental sociology should contribute towards knowledge that will help deal with independently real environmental problems and issues that arise from them. They assert that constructionism tends to relativise knowledge, reducing it to a collection of ever presenting competing claims. This is said to immobilise constructive efforts to alleviate and/or resolve environmental problems and issues. Recently, realists McCright and Dunlap (2011), in respect of climate change, have argued that more attention needs to be paid to the relationships between economic advantage, political power and the management of scientific evidence about environmental risks.

The extent to which a constructionist approach can be said to neutralise relations with the environment or nature is debatable (Burningham & Cooper, 1999). Even so, Burningham and Cooper (1999) argue that from a realist perspective, constructionists appear to court political quietism and moral apathy in respect of the modern experience of risk. However, as Hannigan (1995: 31) asserts, recognising the social construction of knowledge does not discount environmental problems and concerns, rather it makes one critically aware of their deep and multifaceted character. Therefore, a constructionist approach is not about refuting the existence of an independent reality 'out there' but about accentuating its social construction in all its dynamism (Hannigan, 1995: 31).

Buttel, Dickens, Dunlap and Gijswijt (2002: 24) predict that the realism-constructionism debate is becoming less meaningful because those involved largely talk past both positions. Recognising the incompleteness of people's knowledge and that the world is only socially knowable, May (1997) proposes that a different definition of realism must be applied to social research from that of science. May (1997) asserts that this definition, unlike positivism and empiricism, should not necessarily assume an independent

knowable reality. An example is Hammersley's (1992: 50) 'subtle realism' which acknowledges an independent reality, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that reality is accessible only through people's representations. There is arguably a blurring of the boundaries between 'subtle realism' and 'mild constructionism' with respectively subtle biases towards realism and constructionism.

Hannigan (1995: 187-188) raises the challenge to a constructionist approach by advocates of a realist approach regarding the study of the environment, namely that constructionism is vulnerable relativism. However, this study does not adopt the extreme constructionist approach that is often the subject of this criticism. As discussed in this Chapter, by virtue of its social context, construction does not happen in a vacuum. As will be discussed in further detail later in this Chapter and in Chapter 3 with respect to group/s as a social entity/ies, meaning is open to contestation and in construction people consider what is likely to be socially legitimated and what is not, as well as the consequences of doing so. Additionally, when people talk they tend to engage in familiar ways, drawing on familiar constructions and on an awareness of wider social constructions in society, and in such circumstances, meaning is constrained and limited in just how relative it can be.

2.3 Interpretations of nature and/or environment

Fundamental to groups' constructions of their ecological identity/ies are their interpretations of environment. A review of the literature offers up many interpretations of environment and/or nature. These include conflicting, ambiguous, singular, plural and conflated interpretations of environment and/or nature. To explore this more fully, this section begins with a modest review of a range of academic writings on different interpretations of nature, leading on to that of environment.

Sociologists Macnaghten and Urry (1998) claim that nature is capriciously perceived, its meaning contested and that people can hold, at any one time, several conflicting perceptions of nature. They contend that there is,

"no singular 'nature' as such, only a variety of contested natures; and that each such nature is constituted through a variety of socio-cultural processes from which such natures cannot be plausibly separated" (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 1).

Nature as natural has been used to refer to what is expected by society as a norm, to describe the non-human living and non-living environment; this can have undertones of spirituality, and is often constructed morally. Two key descriptions of nature are that it is a noun, referring to the physical non-human world and/or to the innate qualities of a person or animal (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). In his review of the classical and religious meanings of nature, the influential spiritual thinker the former Archbishop of York, Habgood (2002) asserts that despite the multiple, overlapping and escalated meanings associated with nature, a shared meaning of a 'sense of givenness' exists. Habgood (2002) uses the notion of escalation to describe how nature appears to have outgrown its early meanings, permeating many aspects of present day life. Three, fixed 'common threads of meaning' he suggests are,

"an essential nature of a thing which comprises all those qualities and characteristics which always belong to it...as a principle or force, describes the way thing happen...the whole universe" (Habgood, 2002:14-16).

These threads resonate with literary critic Williams' (1983: 219) interpretation of nature as a highly evolved, complex word that is heavy with Western history, and yet at the same time generally understood. The Western influence on thinking about nature is evident in the post enlightenment's shift from the interpretation of nature as associated with creation (religion) to a more scientific interpretation subject to laws or forces (Williams, 1983: 222).

In an attempt to bring clarity, Barry (1999) asserts that the common understanding of nature and environment is illuminated by comparison with the respective antonyms. For example, environment as contrasted with nature illuminates meanings about human society and the non-human world. Nature can be interpreted as that which is not of humankind, not of technocratic innovation, and/or which is sacred and valued for its

otherness to human society – its lack of artifice. In turn, human society can be conceptualised as being part of environment. (Barry, 1999: 17)

Cock's (2007) review of South African experiences and interpretations, of power and justice, in human and non-human relationships, is premised on the interpretation of nature as a 'site of struggle' (2007: 1). She interprets nature as a social construction, noting that constructions of nature reflect different understandings of the natural world. Notably, throughout her book she speaks interchangeably of nature and environment. This can be said to reflect the interpretation of humans interacting with nature in their everyday dwelling; and nature as apart from the social world, where, nature is,

"a place apart, a place to visit...But nature is not external...We live in nature and interact with it every day in the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe" (Cock, 2007: 1).

Bennett, Grossberg and Morris (2005: 238) claim that human perceptions of nature are changing dramatically. This is occurring because of perceived increase in risks from contaminations, such as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), the depletion of key natural resources and more 'technoscientific innovations', such as genetically modified foods, resulting in the substitution of nature and natural, with words such as organic and environment (Bennett *et al.*, 2005: 238).

By way of exploring notions of nature further, environment is defined as a noun, referring to the 'surroundings' in which people, animals and plants live or operate in, and/or,

"the natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011).

These definitions illustrate the ambiguity and the lack of a definitive boundary between what is nature and what is environment. As discussed, nature is also interpreted as an external reality, a condition and/or force that exists with or without humans. Nevertheless, it is evident from the literature that nature and environment are often used synonymously. In every day usage, this potentially infers a casual overlap of interpretations and/or different and particular

emphases grounded in being part of or separate from nature; at other times they are interpreted as the same. However, Macnaghten and Urry, assert that,

“nature became the ‘environment’” (1998: 32),

as part of a political process regarding present day environmentalism. According to Macnaghten and Urry (1998) through environmentalism, nature (interpreted as that not of the social world) became something to protect from the progress and risks associated with the social development of modernity. Nevertheless, they declare that people's lives are embedded in nature.

Anthropologist Ingold (2000) proposes a different perspective of environment. This is premised on a relational notion, which he refers to as a dwelling perspective, where, the

“world as it exists and takes on meaning in direct relation to me, and in that sense it came into existence and undergoes development with me and around me” (Ingold, 2000: 20).

Ingold claims that nature ceases to exist for those who are engaged in living in the environment (2000: 60). This notion of people embedded in the environment resonates with Macnaghten and Urry's (1998) position. However, while Ingold (2000) similarly rejects the realist view of nature or environment, he also rejects the cultural representation of nature. Drawing on his interpretations of hunter-gather communities, Ingold (2000: 41-43) argues that in Western thinking there is a false dichotomy between nature and culture. He finds that in terms of intentional worlds, there is an objective, real nature and also a social, cultural world in which nature is presented as a cultural construction.

Ingold presents a dwelling perspective wherein people are ‘organism-persons’, actively engaging in an environment of other organisms, human and non-human (2000: 5). People are viewed as an inseparable part of the environment, where body, mind and culture are not viewed as separate entities but, as Ingold notes, a single locus of development actively engaging in an environment, comprising human and non-human entities (2000:

4). As these relations unfold, as life continues, so environment is particularly and skilfully perceived (Ingold, 2000: 5). In this way, environment can be seen as that in which humans and non-humans dwell. It is also an ever unfolding, dynamic experience and interpretation as humans engage socially and humans and non-humans engage ecologically.

There is an apparent resonance between Ingold's view of the environment and many indigenous, traditional African societies perception of environment. Ouedraogo declares that these societies experience and interpret nature as a living entity,

"inhabited by supernatural beings and living creatures" (2005: 19),

where social relations are also seen to have moral consequences for the relations between humans and non-humans. Notably, Ouedraogo's view is underpinned by claim that such societies subscribe to the notion that everything is about or of God (2005: 19). This brings a spiritual or religious dimension into the understanding of environment and/or nature (see Section 2.5.3 for further discussion).

Ingold's reasons that being an organism is what links a human to the non-human, thus giving rise to the notion of 'organism-persons' (2000: 5) engaging in ecological relations. This links to the work of the anthropologist Bateson's (2000) view on the ecology of the human mind. Writing in 1972, Bateson suggested that the relationship between people as thinking entities and their wider environment in which they dwelt could not be explained by the Cartesian reasoning that was typical of the Enlightenment era (Bateson, 2000). He contended that rather than the Cartesian interpretation of the human mind as an internal entity separated from the external environment by a boundary of skin, there existed instead, systems of ecologies in which mind, energy and matter are separate but connected by flows (Bateson, 2000).

Franklin also challenges the dichotomy between nature and culture or the external non-human world and the social world. He asserts that people have never been separated

from nature, and at the very least the borders of such a division are increasingly permeable as to be almost non-existent. He attributes this in part to the new religiosity, wherein people have rediscovered their relationship with nature. Cities, often referred to as concrete landscapes devoid of nature in the everyday experiential sense are, he suggests, instead thriving centers of coexistence of people and nature. This is an example of Franklin's conceptualisation of hybridity. Hybridity, he purports, is about the coexistence of people and nature as well as the everyday normative development of this relationship. Another example of this is the tending of city home gardens (Franklin, 2002).

As discussed, there are many different ways of interpreting the world around us and our experiences of it. Throughout this discussion, realist and constructionist positions contrast, emphasising the importance of appreciating what reality is perceived as when considering conceptualisations of environment and/or nature. Working through these different philosophical positions, one can appreciate that the environment is central to our understanding of our existence, of who we are and of our non-human relations.

2.4 Environment and societal development

It seems that what the environment means to us, how we perceive it and ourselves, has and is intimately associated with our social development. It is evident that the way in which we know ourselves, as society in relation to the environment, our social modes and social order, has and is drastically changing with significant implications as to our understanding of our identity in relation to notions of environment and nature. This section explores the dynamic between social development and environment.

Human relations with nature

Interpretations of nature as a human resource have been underpinned by the notion of nature as the non-human part of the environment in which humans dwell. For example, American environmental historian Worster (1993) asserts early American settlers and twentieth century Americans developed a narrative of nature as a source of abundant

sustenance, shelter and protection for humankind. This narrative was grounded in a biblical, 'Garden of Eden' (1993: 9) type interpretation. According to Worster (1993), this narrative is as much American as it is Western. It has he claims resulted in people being distanced as they developed as a society, from their intimate relations with nature - a consequence of which has been their destructive impact on nature and ultimately the environment in which people dwell.

However, more recently in his review of environmental history, McNeill (2001: 327) argues that widespread environmental destruction is not limited to Christian contexts but occurs also in parts of the world where Buddhism and Hinduism are the main religious framings. McNeill (2001: 328) contends that the admirable intentions of philosophers such as Francis Bacon, who promoted the reciprocal relationship between people and nature, have little impact on the daily lives and activities of individuals and communities who do not intellectualise such relations. Rather, the great strides in science, including technological development, which promoted longevity and expanded wealth, appear to hold greater sway than religion on people's attitude and behaviour towards nature (McNeill, 2001: 328).

Society's modern relationship with nature is influentially underpinned by a perception of human dominance over the environment in which they dwell. This dominance was fuelled by a belief in science and technology (Giddens, 1990). According to Giddens (1990) modern society had faith in the reasoning of science, the knowledge and certainty science provided about their world, and the progress it promoted. However, Barry (1999: 56) purports that during the Enlightenment, poets, writers and artists rebelled against this reasoned, realist modern perspective of nature, presenting instead an innocent and romantic interpretation of nature. The extent of modernity's separation of society and nature is reflected in Macnaghten and Urry's concerns about spatial separation - where the social world is environment and nature is presented as situated along the borders of environment - a touristic attraction (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). Notably Ingold (2005)

argues that this separation is artificial and highlights the strategic or political interpretation of nature by people.

Dwelling in a risky environment

The extent of the denial is subject to debate, but there can be little doubt that Rachel Carson's (1962) review of pesticide usage brought in a new public perception of risk in the environment, plus the emergence of a greater awareness of social development and human and non-human relations. The theme of environmental risk has been taken up by several authors, including Giddens (1990), Beck (1992, 1994) and Bauman (2004). They all argue that the way we live and know our environment has fundamentally changed. They contend that dwelling in the environment has become risky, distanced from traditional social relations and physical surrounds, and uncertain. Science, the flagship of modernity, is viewed as failing to provide security and certainty, with technology viewed as risky in its complexity (Giddens, 1990; Beck, 1992). Network theorist Castells (1997) similarly asserts that the environment is under threat from the forces of technology, economics and social movements. Changes to fundamental nodes of existence such as identity and locus of control regarding the environment are said to be transforming the way in which people dwell (Castells, 1997: 1).

Indeed, late modernity proponent Giddens (1990: 3) argues that the consequences of modernity have dramatically affected how people dwell and know themselves and their environment. Trust for example, a key aspect of social relations, has undergone a critical review (Giddens, 1990). On the one hand there is this lack of trust, yet on the other trust has become critical to embedding in modern social relations (Giddens, 1990). Other consequences are that societal relations are increasingly disembedded from local contexts and more globally connected, distances are collapsed in time and space, the pace of life has increased dramatically and the world is uncertain (Giddens, 1990: 14-15; 79). Intimate and personal aspects of everyday life have changed such that,

"place has become increasingly **phantasmagoric**: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them" (Giddens, 1990:19).

The construction of people's biographies is thus suspended in an intense and rapid universe of meaning (Giddens, 1990).

Risk society advocate Beck (1992) argues that in modernity, risk is everywhere and is socially constructed. The story of this era of society is that of ecological enlightenment (Beck, 1992). The grand meta-narratives of science, which postmodern philosopher Lyotard (1984: xxiv), views with 'incredulity', have Beck (1992) argues, lost their place in providing reasoned universal truths, security and trust. Both Beck (1992) and Lyotard (1984) contend that such overarching narratives have been replaced by local, particular and competing narratives. Notably, Beck (1992) emphasises that the way we dwell, socially interact, define ourselves as individuals and community, is increasingly an experience of local cultural diversity. Additionally these experiences are said to be free of our local dwelling, and instead driven by our interests, aspirations and obligations (Beck, 1992, 1994). In this context, because people are differently skilled in social interaction and dealing with issues such as insecurity, inequality arises (Beck, 1992: 98). According to Elliott (2003), Beck argues that automatic processes of modernisation propel people into 'self-confrontation',

"with the consequences of risk that cannot adequately be addressed, measured, controlled, or overcome, at least according to the standards of industrial society" (Elliott, 2003: 23).

Society effectively critiques itself, where people reflexively review their relations with power, between institutions and individuals (Elliott, 2003). People, Beck claims, are searching for,

"social and personal identities and commitments in detraditionalized culture" (Beck, 1992: 90).

Beck (1992) concludes that the crises of society and that of nature are intertwined.

This study does not focus on institutions and structures in society, as per Beck's (1992, 1994) emphasis. However, both Giddens (1990) and Beck (1992) offer critical perspectives to this study and its exploration of dwelling in modern day South Africa, where, the wider society, regardless of ethnicity, is increasingly experiencing new and modern ways of dwelling (see Chapter 1).

A South African example with global resonance regarding the risk that has become a part of modern dwelling is provided by Cock's (2007) review of the Steel Valley crisis. Iscor, the South African company originally involved in the crises is now part of Mittal Steel,

"the largest steel producing company in the world" (Cock, 2007: 108).

This example also illustrates how the way in which risk is mediated between the wider public, industry and government has changed in South Africa. Over many years, extending back into the apartheid era, air pollution from the steel production process were clearly visible; however, pollution of the groundwater with toxic chemicals was not (Cock, 2007: 112). People and animals became sick and some died from drinking the polluted water (Cock 2007: 113-114). As Cock (2007: 114) declares, like the Love Canal tragedy, this community was initially ignorant of the dangers in their environment and the tragedy was not immediately recognised because it unfolded quietly, almost imperceptibly. In part this was because of the gradual and hidden character of the pollution and its negative consequences regarding humans and non-humans. One can also reasonably argue that this quietness was in some measure related to a fear of job loss and a fear of standing up against industry, especially when critically linked to the socio-economic health of the government, under apartheid rule. Under apartheid rule, a lot of what South Africans knew about their wider environment beyond their direct experience was controlled by the state. In the present day era of democratic governance, the constitutional commitment to sustainable development and a safe and healthy environment for all has brought about publically available studies such as the regular State of the Environment Reports (see Chapter 1). Cock (2007: 116-188) also points to the present day political freedom to

protest and awareness-raising actions of a non-government organisation regarding environmental injustices as expressions of environmental awareness and advocacy in South African society.

More locally, dwelling in Hout Bay is in part about being vulnerable to fire and health issues of water quality and sewage. These risks span natural ecosystem processes and human-non-human relations. Additionally, like other South African communities, Hout Bay residents are uncertain as a consequence of new ways of dwelling and associated experiences, as well as having the political freedom to define themselves on their terms. As a consequence of development and political freedoms, Hout Bay's environment is increasingly been transformed. Under these circumstances, South African, including Hout Bay, communities are attempting to retain, maintain, extend and/or re-define themselves, (See Chapter 1).

In these ways, risk in the environment has and is transforming the way identities are constructed and understood – locally and globally. Postmodern sociologist, Bauman (2004) refers to the present situation as 'liquid modernity'. This, like identity, is a process, as is its interpretation and analysis. For Bauman (2004), liquid modernity has brought about a crisis of belonging, where interpersonal relations are paradoxically both simultaneously desired and not coveted. Identity, as imagined by individuals and communities, has become fluid and a

“hopelessly ambiguous idea and double-edged sword” (Bauman, 2004: 76).

Bauman (2004: 12-13) argues that the 'peculiarities' of people's biographies reflect liquid modern times where the world is fragmented and individual lives are experienced as a string of disjointed episodes. As such, one is never completely in place anywhere, as other identities or fragments of identities are inconsistent, discontinuous and incoherent at particular times and contexts. The freedom to 'compose and decompose' identities is

suspended between one pole and another 'crowded' pole, where choice is possible and where identities are imposed and enforced by others (Bauman, 2004: 38).

In an insecure world, Bauman (2001) claims 'community' is a feel good word and a desirable relationship. Community, he asserts, feels like a warm, cosy, comfortable, safe place offering shelter; it evokes,

"everything we miss and that we lack to be secure, confident and trusting"
(Bauman, 2001: 3).

Presently, under the South African democratic government, groups (and individuals) are faced with the challenge of defining themselves as per their choice and in response to new dwelling experiences - leaving groups open to disintegration and the creation of new formations based on desired self and/or group attributes. This encompasses the White minority who were politically defined. If people have the political freedom, in South Africa, to choose how to socially define themselves, the questions then posed are: how are they doing so? Is this resulting in the disintegration of past definitions and/or reformation of new definitions? Or are people seeking the safety of known identities, seeking to retain and maintain them, against the backdrop of uncertain, risky dwelling? In this study, such questions are specifically considered in respect of the environment.

Nature as antithesis to modern dwelling and environment as problematic

The historian Price (1999) provides an interesting exploration of how modern dwelling has transformed the way in which Americans have defined and redefined their relationships with nature as well as their own identity. She contends that traditional American livelihoods, social and individual identity, and culture were intimately connected to nature. In contrast, modern American livelihoods are about shopping mall consumerism, where nature is ambivalently interpreted and identified with. People, society and culture, Price argues, have become disconnected from nature. Instead there exists consumer-packaged nature as unreal, 'real' nature. This packaging meets a desire to connect with real nature

'out there' in the wilderness. Nature is seen as anti-modernity. Price concludes that the definitions of nature are about being human. Such definitions, she asserts, are historically linked to American identity and the geographic and economic 'disconnections' and desires for meaning in modern everyday American life, (Price, 1999).

Franklin (2002) also considers the modern disconnection between humans and nature. His argument provides further insight into society's strategic conflation of nature and environment, resulting in a depiction of nature as romantic wilderness, a desired place to escape to, or a pristine entity, 'unsullied' (2002: 138) by humankind, apart from society. Yet in this depiction nature is also viewed as under threat from humankind's dwelling practices. In turn, environment has come to be about green and brown environmental issues of pollution, energy, global warming as well as conservation of wild areas and responsible management of natural resources. Everyday nature and practices of gardening, preference for organic food and natural medicines, walking, fishing, bird watching and picnics appear hidden as a result of these conflated social accounts of nature and environment, which in turn produce biased accounts of attitudes and values of nature (Franklin, 2002).

In a sense, Franklin (2002) suggests, like Price (1999) that nature is desired because it is viewed as an antithesis to modern dwelling; it is about a particular human and non-human relationship in which humans can therapeutically reconnect with the non-human part of the environment. According to Franklin (2002), environment is also about human and non-human relationships. These relationships have been strategically framed, by society, by risk; where human activity is presented as posing various risks to the wellbeing of the non-human (nature) environment and relating to issues of moral engagement, such as protecting nature, in respect of their non-human relations. In contrast, Franklin (2002) claims that modern dwelling involves meaningful and mundane everyday human and non-human relationships which are not defined by risk. From this perspective, a preference for organic and natural medicine could be interpreted as an avoidance of certain health risks

and/or a healthy way of living. The South African context, as discussed, also offers the additional dimension that human and human-non-human engagement was politically controlled, under apartheid, and in that respect, environment was about political definition, which encompassed spatial and socio-economic relations; the legacy of apartheid is evident even in the present day spatial location of social settlements in South Africa.

This perception of environment as problematic ties in with environmental economist Helm's assertion that environment assumed the status as 'the economic problem' of the 1990s (1991: ix). By the turn of the century and onward, this narrow economic concern has expanded to include narratives of how to live within society and develop sustainably. The United Nations summits on environment and development are examples of the increasing emphasis on this sustainability – see, for example, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and 2002 United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development (Rogers, Jalal & Boyd, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 1, South Africa's present day human rights framed Constitution (1996) commits to ecological sustainable development and enshrines the population's right to live in a safe and healthy environment, which is also protected for the benefit of 'present and future generations' (see Section 24).

2.5 Identity: defining who and what we are

Central to how people dwell in the environment, how they exist, is how they understand themselves as selves and social selves in groups. Central to this understanding is people's definition of themselves and their interpretation of their dwelling experience and how this discursively informs their understanding of themselves and the environment. Identity is a complex concept with sparse consensus in the literature. From one perspective, scholars such as Layder (1997) and Turner (2007) speak of a core, relatively stable, unified, emotional self that exists in all circumstances. This is a consistent, conscious and unconscious, sense of who one is regardless of context (Turner, 2007: 104). Around the core are sub-identities and role-identities which concern ways of

knowing who one is in different domains and contexts such as, knowing oneself as a father and evaluating whether one is a good father in terms of the role of being a parent involved in his child's school (Turner, 2007). One has a clearer understanding of these identities than the core self (Turner, 2007). Mishler speaks of identity as a complexity of partial identities, where identity is dialogic and relational; a dramatically different way of viewing identity as that which is 'socially distributed', existing in a 'matrix of changing relationships' (1999: 111). Scholars such as Lifton contend that identity is fluid, many sided, fragmented and protean, where protean refers to the many forms identity can take (Lifton, 1999: 1-4). Like Giddens (1991) and Bauman (2001), Lifton (1999) underscores the sensitivity of the self to social forces over time (see, also Section 2.4). Ricoeur (1992: 2-3), a philosopher, stresses that identity does not necessarily imply an unchanging notion of selfhood, but it does reflect the relationship of self to other. Selfhood is said to be so intertwined with 'other' that the two cannot be separated. The sociologist Layder (2004: 10) recognises this relationship but asserts that some part of self is distinct from social identity, while inevitably remaining 'always caught up' in the tension between the personal and the social.

Through these different views, identity can be considered to be about selfhood, sameness and demarcating difference (Douglas, 1990; Ricoeur, 1992). It is an expression of what and how people define themselves as, their beliefs and their values. American psychologist, Bruner (2002: 63) notes that self is a 'quirky' notion that is at once 'obvious to common sense' yet evades definition. Drawing attention to the debate as to whether there is a single 'essential self' or plural and social selves, Bruner (2002: 64) asserts that the self is constantly narrating and re-narrating who it is. Cultural norms about what is expected and acceptable inform this narration, as does the meaning-making dynamic that comes to the fore when telling others about ourselves, how we are the same and yet unique (Bruner, 2002). Layder interprets social activity and identity within the social domain of psychobiography as the,

“feelings, attitudes and predispositions of individuals...we can grasp a person's unique individuality only by understanding their identity and behaviour as it has unfolded over the course of their lives, and is currently embedded in their daily routines and experiences” (Layder, 1997: 2-3).

This position infers that identity is biographical and about everyday interaction. Identity can be considered social, whether with respect to personal (self) or social identity (Mead, 1967; Goffman, 1990; Layder, 2004).

As discussed earlier, this study is appreciative of the symbolic interactionist perspective. Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective which in essence posits that self and society are intimately connected (Denzin, 1992). Early proponents of symbolic interactionism, Cooley and Mead, emphasise the on-going discourse between the self and society, where the self appraises how he or she will be seen by others (Denzin, 1992: 4-5). Mead (1967) recognises the existence at a deep level of a core self identity independent of the social world and emphasises that social experience is fundamental to how people perceive themselves. Self is expressed through language as a means of consciously understanding oneself - that is people reflect on how others see them as well as interpret the relationship between their internal 'I' and their external 'me' (Mead, 1967).

Social constructionists, Berger and Luckmann similarly contend that identity is social,

“formed by social processes. Once crystallized, it is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social processes...Conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it” (1991: 194).

These social processes, Berger and Luckmann (1991) purport, are located in people's everyday experiences and critically inform their natural attitude. In making their case, they draw on Schutz's 'everyday' common knowledge dissertation 'natural attitude' concept. Such that the,

“reality of everyday life further presents itself...as an intersubjective world” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991: 37).

By this they mean a world shared with others, where common sense knowledge is knowledge shared in the taken for granted routines of everyday life (Berger & Luckmann, 1991: 37). This is a critical interpretation in respect of this study, underscoring the significance of social processes in identity construction and reconstruction. It also accentuates the earlier argument (see Section 2.2) that meaning is constrained by social interpretations and relations that occur outside of the research context in everyday life.

This research interest is located at the level of social group (as linked to communities) and as such the emphasis is not on self. Nevertheless, an understanding of the dynamics between self and social self is fundamental to understanding the dynamics between social self and social group, as the following discussion of social identity illustrates.

2.5.1 Social identity

Social group

Social group identity is a 'psychological entity',

"which can find its form in collective social behaviour, where collective action is co-ordinated by the common social identity of the actors" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988: 209).

Critically, social group identity is not reducible to personal or social self identity (Turner, 1982). From this perspective, group perception, values and attitudes cannot be unpacked to be about self (Turner, 1982). This position contrasts with other theories of group behaviour, in particular, those in the field of psychology. Social identity proponents Hogg and Abrams (1988) cite the well known claim by psychologist Allport who contends that there are no groups, only a collection of the psychologies of individuals.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explores group social dynamics from a different perspective to psychology. According to SIT proponent Turner, early social identity studies suggest that the,

“mere awareness of being in one group as opposed to another was sufficient under certain conditions to trigger processes of intergroup discrimination and competition” (1999: 8).

Social Identity Theory (SIT), an expanded view

SIT and Social Categorization Theory (SCT) are related theories which together can be regarded as an expanded view of SIT. These theories offer a meaningful way of understanding everyday social dwelling groups, which is a central interest of this study; they are also useful because, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, this study used focus groups as a method of data generation.

SIT is concerned with broad social group definitions, such as race and ethnicity. Specifically, SIT looks at how personal attitudes, values, judgments, perceptions and behaviour shift between the positions of an individual acting in terms of inter-personal relations and when acting in terms of inter-group relations (Tajfel, 1978). For this author, social identity was initially conceptualised, as,

“the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972: 292).

Emotional value and the importance of maintaining a positive self image through association with a group are fundamental aspects of group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In exploring these relations, Tajfel and Turner (1979) found that within large and small groups, personal identity remained and was especially salient when an individual strongly disagreed with the group. This illustrates an important expression of self in a group context, that is, when there is a lack of consensus between the beliefs, attitudes and/or behaviour of the self and the group. SIT also posits that the group, as a social entity, offers an individual several representations to identify with, such as by religion, nationality, ethnic group, political party or career (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Despite the difference in perspective, it is insightful to note that several psychology studies have explored conformity within groups, in other words, an expression of sameness or consensus between group members. These studies typically compare and contrast the influence of the majority and minority participants on one another. A classic example is Asch's (1955) influential laboratory study of college students, which compared three different lines of obvious different lengths with a master line. Only one line was clearly the same as the master line. In one experiment, the majority, some eight participants, were rehearsed to reason nonsensically about the answers, finally all agreeing on one answer which was clearly wrong. The test subject (participant) was unaware of this rehearsal, and so had to answer in an apparent context of majority views that conflicted with his or her own reasoning. This was ascertained by testing this participant individually. Asch (1955) found that a significant amount of test subjects conformed to the majority position illustrating the profound influence of the majority in group contexts. Those who did not conform appeared to place a greater emphasis on their own opinions (judgment) rather than that of social group. According to Moscovici (1976), majority and minority influence within groups is complex and subtle. Moscovici (1976) argues that most especially when the minority is consistent in their behavioural style, they can notably impact the views of the majority through conversion - albeit not as significantly as majority influence.

Returning to the discussion of SIT/SCT, how individuals evaluate their group membership is said to involve social categorisation and stereotyping of group or social identity in terms of in-groups and out-groups (Turner, 1982, 1987; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Categorisation and stereotyping are central contributions which SCT makes to the understanding of social identity. It is in the context that SCT is said to expand SIT.

Categorisation, McGarty (1999) asserts, is about identifying what things are by assigning them to categories on the basis of what they are similar to and what they differ from. Identification depends on the saliency of social identity and the degree to which an

individual identifies, or does not, with in and/or out groups (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982, 1991). Notably the categorisation of self and others into groups is grounded in an individual's prototypical 'fuzzy' perception of groups' attributes, such as beliefs and attitudes as well as feelings and behaviour (Hogg & Terry, 2000: 123). Within an in-group, Turner (1991: 164-165, 1999: 17) contends this occurs when there is variation as to the extent and the levels at which individuals identify with the group, as well as where group consensus determines the person who best represents the group definition.

SCT theory postulates that self categorisation leads to self stereotyping and consequentially a depersonalised perception of self. It is a fundamental way in which individuals think about their in-groups and out-groups. When individuals define themselves as members of a shared social category (in-group), individuals stereotype themselves and others. As such, in-group similarities and out-group differences are perceptually accentuated. When social identity is significant, individuals perceive themselves less as differing individuals and more as similar to their perceived prototypical in-group identity category representative, (Turner, 1999).

How individuals interpret group attributes and themselves as part of a group (us) and as not part of another group (them or other) is complex (Operario & Fiske, 2001: 23). Operario & Fiske (2001) assert that stereotypes, a) are more ambivalent than initially assumed, comprising both positive and negative attributes of a group; b) display emboldened negative or extreme attributes; c) are context specific in terms of strength; d) function to maintain division between 'us' and 'them'; and e) are an,

"inherent by product of the human cognitive system, yet controllable with personal motivation and effort" (Operario & Fiske, 2001: 23).

Critically, social identity can sometimes function,

"to the relative exclusion of personal identity" (Turner, 1984: 527).

Social identity is then re-conceptualised as,

"the process which transforms interpersonal into intergroup behaviour." (Turner, 1999: 11)

As such, Terry and Hogg (1996) posit that individuals' attitudes and behaviour are informed by group norms when social identity is strong. These interpretations offer critical insight into group dynamics, emphasising the importance of recognising the tension between self and group in terms of group membership, as well as the attraction of selves to a group such that group identity is a salient expression of who they are. An important aspect of this, as mentioned, is stereotyping.

The social practice of everyday dwelling

From an anthropological perspective, according to Bourdieu (1990a, 1990b), people are embedded in a multi-dimensional social space in which they interact in complicated and strategic ways which impact how they dwell and define themselves. Individual and social dimensions form part of Bourdieu's (1977, 1986, 1990a, 1990b) three key cultural concepts which offer insights, beyond social group theory, as to how people dwell and seek to define themselves, namely, *habitus*, social fields and capital.

Habitus, is described by Bourdieu (1977, 1990a, 1990b) as the set of dispositions, the ways of being that emerge through the practice of being. It is context specific and is expressed through the activity of being, such as the way one walks. Four aspects of *habitus* are highlighted because they draw attention to how people dwell and what influences the way they dwell and know themselves in everyday practice. These are that *habitus* ; a) is informed by the practical experiences of childhood; b) is slow to change, always tied unconsciously to one's earlier practice of being; c) as a,

"product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history - ...It ensures the active presence of past experiences which, deposited in each organism in the forms of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms" (Bourdieu 1990a: 54);

and d) can become 'divided against itself' (Bourdieu, 1999a: 511) when people move into new social fields. A further insight is that Bourdieu (1977) argues that *habitus* concerns tacit understandings which are often counter to the rule of law, institutional directives and/or expert-scientific knowledge. An example of this is found in Bourdieu's (1977) ethnographic study of the Kabyle (Algeria) people and their social life. According to Bourdieu (1977) the Kabyle have official and unofficial marital customs and traditions. Official marriages observe official kinship in the marital negotiations and follow laws of genealogical protocol. Unofficial marriages do not, were often scandalous yet could be undertaken by keeping it within the family and with due consideration with regards to finance and power. Tacit notions of environment including how people dwell therein are like Bourdieu's rules of custom,

"very close in this respect to sayings and proverbs....,have nothing in common with the transcendent rules of a juridical code: everyone is able, not so much to cite and recite them from memory, as to reproduce them (fairly accurately)" (1977: 17).

How we dwell in everyday life affects our social relations, our experience of the environment around us and vice versa our constructions of who we are. The notion of *habitus* suggests that this emerges in everyday practice. In turn, Bourdieu's (1990a) concept of social space is especially defined by social relations which are underpinned by the status, management and flow of various forms of capital namely economic, cultural and social (Bourdieu, 1990a). Bourdieu (1990a, 1990b) conceptualises social space in terms of social fields in which social games are played. The objective is to accrue capital and realise aspirations of social positioning. Fields are defined by what is at stake, resources and rules (Bourdieu, 1993, 1990b). Participants in a game share a tacit appreciation for what the stakes are (Bourdieu, 1990a) and participants can oppose one another or collaborate and skills are critical to how they fare (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). At any time, game strategies and the capital resource status of participants influences their access to opportunities (game chances) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Over time, this influences participants (peoples) social trajectory and their *habitus* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 99).

All forms of capital are important. The significance lies not only in the amount of capital people accrue but in the flows between the three different capital forms and flows within different forms, such as embodied and institutional capital forms. Capital enables people to reach out towards the attainment of their desires, which can be interpreted as what they want and who they want to be, and in turn who they become or don't become. Capital also influences their competitive capacity. Economic capital emphasises people's monetary or exchange value; social and cultural capital are less obvious. (Bourdieu, 1990b)

Social capital is defined as the,

“sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 119).

Field's (2003) critical review of social capital further identifies trust, shared values and reciprocity as fundamental aspects of social capital. In essence, these aspects enable people to access intangible resources in social groups such as family trust and security.

In turn, cultural capital refers to education, skills and knowledge held by individuals or groups which enables them to better leverage their position and status in society. Bourdieu conceptualises three different forms of cultural capital, namely, embodied, objectified and institutionalised. The first is about the sense of who one is, the second is an expression of owned cultural goods such as art and the third form refers to institutional recognitions, typically educational ones (Bourdieu, 1986).

Having explored some notions of identity and social self, as well as different interpretations of nature and/or environment in earlier section, the focus of the discussion now turns to people's definition of themselves in respect of the environment, that is, ecological identity.

2.5.2 Ecological identity

There are several concepts which refer to how and what we know ourselves as in terms of the environment. These include ecological identity, environmental identity, place attachment, place identity and landscape. Some of the literature employs notions of home, belonging and everyday dwelling practice. Central to these various interpretations is people's existence in a human and non-human environment. Additionally, as mentioned in the earlier discussion of identity, how people define themselves concerns their beliefs, values and behaviour. A critique of a selection of relevant literature in this context is not about competing interpretations. Rather it is about the different frames they arise from, the overlap between many interpretations and the different and similar insights they potentially offer.

Environmental identity and ecological identity

Ecological identity and environmental identity are two similar concepts found in the literature. There is a trend within the literature to preference one or other of the terms rather than contrast interpretations thereof. As discussed below, both concepts recognise that people's experience of their environmental or ecological relations profoundly effects their personal and social identity construction.

Writing from a social psychology perspective about environmental identity, Clayton and Opatow (2003) explore the relationship between identity, fairness (justice) and the natural environment. According to them, environmental identity is an expression of the extent to which a) humans perceive themselves as similar to the 'natural world', and b) identified natural entities are considered as 'valued components' of humankind's 'social and moral community' (Clayton & Opatow, 2003: 8). This interpretation draws on Opatow's (1996) earlier appraisal of fairness in respect of what and who people consider are part of their wider community. Consistent with a symbolic interactionist perspective, such as that appreciated by this study, Clayton and Opatow, declare that nature is,

“given an identity through the way in which people view and experience their relationship with it, but it also influences individual identities” (2003: 9).

Nature and the natural environment are interpreted in an ‘average person’s sense’,

“in which the influence of humans is minimal or nonobvious, to living components of that environment (such as trees and animals), and to nonanimate natural environmental features, such as the ocean shore” (2003: 6).

This conceptualisation of environmental identity and nature resonates for example with American conservationists Leopold (1968) and Thoreau's (2005) writings on people's relationship with nature. Leopold (1968) speaks of wilderness, a place apart from society, as nature. Similarly, Thoreau (2005) describes an escape from society to the woods (nature). Leopold advocates an ‘ecological conscience’ for humankind, where land was a community, a concept of ecology, which should be ‘loved and respected’ (1968: viii). Leopold (1968) presents this as a land ethic, that is, a respect for the land which is based on the perception of community as comprising humans and non-humans, living and non-living entities. Even so, Leopold observes that not all people share a land ethic. A wheat farmer, for example, only values wheat and oxen, regarding pigeons as useless and has so destroyed them (1968: 107). For Leopold an ‘ecological conscience’ arises from whether one believes one can or can't live without wild things (1968: vii). Leopold's perspective tends to an ethical framing of the environment while Thoreau (2005) presents a religious as well as a conservation frame. Furthermore, in describing his relationship with nature, Thoreau declares that he is ‘monarch’ (2005: 42) of all he sees but also considers himself like nature in as much as,

“The life in us is like the water in the river” (Thoreau, 2005: 153).

Interestingly, Clayton and Opatow (2003: 9-12) conceptualise environmental identity on an individual and/ or group basis, as ranging in respect of social influence. On the one scale end, nature is experienced and understood as almost having no human influence and on the other it is socially mediated. Ambiguously in respect of what environment is versus

nature, they also note that environmental identity is in a complex way about a 'dynamic interplay between the social and environmental' (2003: 11).

While appreciating the insights these authors offer regarding the notion of environmental identity, my preference in this study is for the concept, ecological identity. In my opinion, this concept is more open to the many ways people dwell within a human and non-human environment and how they dynamically define themselves in respect of the environment.

Several authors have defined ecological identity or notions thereof. These interpretations resonate at times and at other times there are fundamental differences in emphases within those interpretations.

Environmental educationalist Thomashow, considers ecological identity to be,

"all the different ways people construe themselves in relationship to the earth as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self. Nature becomes an object of identification" (1996: 3).

However he also recognises this interpretation of nature is ambiguous, given that nature is a,

"social construction, a human concept, varying from culture to culture, and person to person" (1996: 3).

Thomashow's (1996) conceptualisation of ecological identity concerns individuals' perceptions of their ecological relationships. He regards it as a personal interpretation of life experience and 'connection to the earth' – one that transcends social relations (Thomashow, 1996: 3). Notably, this study is interested in social interpretations of ecological identity. However, Thomashow's (1996) views suggest that there is a deeply personal and emotional dimension to how people define themselves in respect of the environment. Drawing on the aforementioned SIT, the possibility exists that this could be important in respect of the positive experience individuals desire and/or derive from being a part of certain groups.

Anthropologist Ingold (2000) presents a different interpretation of ecological identity, underpinned by the understanding that people are embedded within the environment. Ingold's point of departure is his aforementioned concept of *organisms* - comprising humans and non-humans. The fundamental notion of *organisms* within a dwelling perspective sets Ingold's (2000) interpretation of what can be called ecological identity apart from the former two definitions. Ingold asserts that as organisms, people engage socially – where social relations are interpreted as a

“sub-set of ecological relations” (2000:5).

As such, everyday experiences,

“contribute to the shaping of a person's own sense of self, and of their attitudes and orientations towards the world” (Ingold, 2000: 99).

Furthermore, in dwelling as *organisms* within the environment, Ingold (2000) claims that people are perceptually attuned and skilled. In this way, their experiences, including what they discover in their environments and their interpretation thereof is about perceptual attenuation and skill – which may differ (on this basis) between different communities and/or cultures (see Ingold, 2000: 162). Ingold's dwelling perspective also shifts the discussion from a more self-based interpretation of ecological identity to a social - or even ecological - interpretation.

What makes some people environmentalists and others not, asks anthropologist, Milton (2002). Milton (2002) concurs with Ingold (2000) that people are immersed in the environment and she accepts that there are social-cultural influences that guide experience and interpretation of the meaning of environment. However, she argues that the unique configuration of each individual's perceptions, values and identities arises from more than social-cultural influences to be an intensely personal and direct experience of the environment (Milton, 2002). Milton (2002) proposes an 'ecology of emotion' perspective. Emotions she feels are fundamental to learning from engaged being. They

are a mechanism, which functions to focus our attentions, direct our attachments and to infuse memories with emotional experience (Milton, 2002). This in turn influences our 'feeling' recall of that memory and our subsequent perceptions.

"Whatever we find most emotionally compelling - most exciting, most interesting, most tragic, most satisfying, most awe-inspiring, most guilt-provoking, most enjoyable-becomes what matters most, what we hold most sacred." (Milton 2002: 149).

Milton (2002) qualifies this statement, noting people would feel with different strengths towards different things at different times. Milton's (2002) perspective arguably advocates an *emotional* ecological identity or suggests that ecological identity is deeply emotional at a personal level. Although her argument focuses on the individual, it is conceivable, taking into account social identity theory (SIT/SCT) that such emotional being fundamentally informs group membership – where a strong social dimension exists in terms of allegiance to a group (in-group) and the expectations inherent in such membership.

According to Holliday, culture exists when people form groups (2002: 12). Holliday defines culture as a dynamic concept and

"an unaccountable noun which refers to the cohesive behaviour as a basic feature of the human condition" (2002: 12).

Holliday (2002: 12) acknowledges that this interpretation is intentionally more straightforward than that often found in the literature – and hence gives interpretive space to discover social groups' definitions and different characters. This interpretation also resonates with the aforementioned SIT/SCT; culture is linked to relations within groups (Holliday, 2002: 12) and it can be argued that it is therefore about social relations and social identity.

Triandis (1994) and subsequently Triandis and Trafimow (2001), set up a nature-culture division in their interpretation of culture and ecology. This contrasts Ingold's (2000, 2005) dwelling perspective which, as discussed, is based on the notion it is only environment in

which human and non-human organisms are ecologically engaged. Triandis (1994: 22) asserts that culture influences what people see in the world around them; where that physical world is interpreted as ecology. In traditional eras, culture, Triandis argues concerned human survival in 'ecological niches' (1994: 22). What ensured survival then was shared through communication, which was facilitated by humans speaking the same language and by living together. Cultural influences differ and culture is different because of different ecologies in which people's dwelling is situated; for example urban ecologies can differ from rural ecologies (Triandis, 1994).

Cultural anthropologist, Geertz (1973) also argues that culture concerns the social transmission of meaning. It is about social interpretations, values and attitudes (Geertz, 1973). Taking an interpretive approach, espoused by Max Weber, Geertz famously declares that,

“man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be ...an interpretative one in search of meaning” (1973:5).

However, Ingold (2000: 160-161) argues that Geertz's (1973) 'culture' produces too common and rigid a framework of meaning grounded in representations which tend to be impervious to experience and time. Instead, Ingold claims that the environment does not 'confront' but 'surrounds' organisms - where meaning is continuously discovered through embodied experiences (2000: 168). Ingold (2000: 55) contends that rather than enculturation, knowledge and meaning are gathered through enskilment; and enskilment is achieved through sentient ecology. Inspired by Gibson's ecological psychological perspective, Ingold argues that sentient ecology is knowledge gained about the environment that is gathered through feeling and context specific skilled practices (Ingold, 2000: 55-58). For example, Ingold (2000: 20-21) references his father showing him fungi as they walk through the countryside. Ingold discovers fungi through perceptual engagement of sight, touch, feel and smell as well as the overall experience of the context. In a similar way he argues that values and knowledge (as opposed to

information) nesting in culture are transmitted between generations. Ingold's (2000) perspective - with its numerous examples of traditional communities' dwelling - provides an alternative way of understanding how groups, especially communities, a) define themselves in respect of the environment, b) ecologically engage as particular cultural groups and c) discover meaning about themselves and their wider environment. His perspective allows one to interpret cultural definitions dynamically.

In the discussion of environmental identity, ethics and/or spirituality were mentioned as part of how people defined themselves and experienced nature. According to Deep Ecology advocate Naess (Drengson & Naess, 2005) ecological identity concerns a spiritual relationship and the promotion of ethical relationships with all the communities of nature. The ecological self (Naess, 1995) is said to be a product of self realisation achieved through a deep experience of ecology, spontaneous emotional behaviour and ethical questioning. In the earlier discussion of social identity, values, attitudes and behaviour were mentioned as important to how people defined themselves as group members and defined their group/s. Spirituality and ethics can be considered a part of this. It is significant for example that Ingold, while appreciating the value of environmental ethics, argues that sentient ecology is 'pre-objective and pre-ethical' – it is about the engagement and experience regarding practical everyday dwelling (2000: 25). Furthermore, considering Thomashow (1996) and even Clayton and Opatow's (2003) interpretations of ecological/environmental identity with their references to the self, one is alert to the possibilities that spirituality and ethics may be more about self, or more about social self and group, and/or caught in the tension between self and the social world.

Identity and place, space, landscape

The previous section on environmental identity and ecological identity explored various interpretations of humankind's relationship with nature or within the human-non-human environment. This section explores how place, space and landscape contribute to notions of identity. A starting point is Taylor's (2003: 193) emphasis on places we lived in as more

than 'backgrounds' to people's lives. She asserts that when people narrate their 'life story' they link place to who they are; 'someone' 'of a place' is connected to multiple 'meanings and identities of that place' – an identity claim of 'belonging' to that place (Taylor, 2003: 193).

Taylor (2010), drawing on works such as Giddens (1991), notes that today, people are not only involved in their identity projects as they dwell in the environment, they are also faced with conducting identity work in the face of drastically changed and changing relationships to place and the ways in which they know themselves.

Several authors writings about place and identity provide insight, from a realist perspective, into how particular physical parts of the environment becoming meaningful to people, to their construction of who they are. From a psychological perspective, Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983) provide an early interpretation of what they term, place-identity (originally hyphenated; in this study hyphen removed). Place identity, conceived as a sub-structure of identity, is a mixture of,

“memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings, as well as types of settings” (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983: 60).

Proshansky's *et al.* (1983) interpretation is underpinned by a notion of a coherent central self, even though they acknowledge that memories, feelings and other identified processes in respect of place identity are fragmented and constantly in process. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) draw attention to a key criticism of this notion of place identity, as informed by Korpela (1989), that, 'there is no account' of the processes that 'guide action in relation to identity' and

“therefore no explanation of how or why places become salient for the self-concept” (1996: 205)

Dixon and Durrheim (2004) also highlight this limitation. Their study on desegregation in South Africa, set in a KwaZulu Natal coastal town with observations of the local beach

(public space) offers insight into the South African context as well as notions of place and space and how they are important to the ways in which people experience and known themselves within the environment. Dixon and Durrheim note, racial desegregation (and conversely the former racial segregation),

“invariably produces a re-organization of space and place. By definition, the process entails a transformation of boundaries so that new kinds of encounter and co-presence become possible” (2004: 456).

Individuals and groups, they note, can establish ‘rich social and psychological connections’ within the environment, enabling places of meaning to emerge (2004: 458). Dixon and Durrheim assert that desegregation involves a ‘disruption’ to ‘established place identities’ because people are faced with a ‘loss of place’, a loss of meaning which threatens a ‘loss of self’ (2004: 458). This study is primarily concerned with how Hout Bay communities or groups define themselves – ethnically or otherwise. Nevertheless the re-organisation of space and place in Hout Bay and throughout South Africa, drawing on Dixon and Durrheim’s (2004) study, offers a rich context in which to study ecological identity – the way in which groups know themselves in respect of the environment and establish meaning, such that space becomes place.

The influential realist geographer Tuan’s (1977) explication of the experience of place and space explores how mutually dependent concepts of place and space shape how people perceive and form attachments to specific environments. Tuan’s argument attempts to go beyond culture, in the sense that he assumes that culture is everywhere, leaving him to focus on how people dwell within the environment as humans. Tuan (1977) adopts an experiential perspective, where space is about the direct experience of room to move around in, and place is an object, in which people dwell, but which cannot be carried about and whose value is condensed therein. Linking space to place, Tuan argues that people move through space, with direction, from one place to another. Place defines space and in giving it value, through sensual awareness and activity including reflection, space becomes place. As such, a street corner can become a meaningful place within a

neighbourhood space. Visible places and their myths enhance people's sense of identity as do attachments to place fostered by memories, recall of smells and a sense of familiarity and security. Places such as communities and geographical locations can have identities as perceived by people - whether individuals and social groups. A village, for example, can be a place where a community consciously defines itself (social identity) as distinct from neighbouring communities. In this way, Tuan argues place can inform social identity (Tuan, 1977). Notably, in his subsequent writings, Tuan presents the term, *topophilia*, which he says refers to the,

"affective bond between people and place" (1990: 4).

It is about the personal experience of place which he claims is informed by pre-existing cultural attitudes.

Another conceptualisation of place concerns the psychological notion of place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992). Space and focus do not allow for an extended review of this notion in this thesis. However, Clayton and Opatow (2003: 9) do note that this notion is consistent, in their view, with the idea that people can have 'emotional connections' to meaningful 'aspects of places' and that through their relationships with places and their experiences there, the natural world is given an identity, as are individuals. They also assert that definitive 'attachments to and contrasts with nature' can form the basis of group identities such as hikers, dog walkers, and environmental activists (for example, land protection activists) (2003: 9). Like Tuan's (1977) argument, place attachment can be said to transform space into place (Altman & Low, 1992).

There are numerous other interpretations of place and identity reported in the literature. Experience and meaning are clearly fundamental to the creation of place and to the construction of identity in respect of place. In contrast to notions of place identity and attachment, Ingold's (2000) concept of landscape offers an alternate view of space and place. He likens space to planning a route on a counter-board. In contrast to travelling

within the environment between two places, each imbued with meaning and where relevance is gained through the experience of dwelling, with space,

“meanings are **attached** to the world” (Ingold, 2000: 192).

Landscape, Ingold stresses is about gathering meaning from the position of being embedded within the environment (2000: 192). This extends to memory which Ingold asserts is ‘congealed’ in the landscape (2000: 141). He claims that landscape is not space, land or nature. He argues that land can be held and measured and is ‘homogenous’ in meaning, while landscape is ‘qualitative and heterogeneous’ in meaning and experience (2000: 190-191). Even though Ingold’s work is influenced by traditional (often non-Western) communities, and may be considered romantic from a modern and Western position, this conceptualisation has a wider reach. Ingold asserts that the particular transformations or evidence of past generations dwelling in the environment, (or landscape) (Ingold, 2000: 193), are experienced in present day dwelling and in the experiential narration of the meaning of place which draws on the past and the imagined future. He posits that there is a temporal dimension inherent in the activity of dwelling – of events (Ingold, 2000: 194-195). For Ingold, the landscape is a collapsed array of dwelling activities, what he calls the ‘taskscape’ (2000: 195). Taskscape, he declares, is about the interactivity of dwelling, which can be heard, in the landscape as organisms engage. Ingold asserts that it is by dwelling in the landscape and participating in the taskscape that people are inherently part of place, and place is part of them.

Ingold’s (2000) views draw on Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the phenomenology of perception – particularly, the notions of primary experience and perception. Pre-objective pre-conscious primary experience (2002: 281), Merleau-Ponty asserts, occurs before expression, anonymously and generally (2002: 250) and in the embodiment of ‘being in the world’ (2002: xiv). Merleau-Ponty contends therefore that perception concerns the experience of living in the world and is also simultaneously informed by past experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 2002: xxii). In respect of this study, such perspectives inform my own

understanding that how people experience and perceive the environment and themselves therein is essentially grounded in their everyday dwelling within the environment. Ecological identity can therefore be said to be continually informed and open to reconstruction, as is the interpretation of what is place and how place is meaningful.

In contrast to this concept of embodied dwelling within the landscape or environment (Ingold, 2000) is prominent American geographer Cosgrove's (1984: 15) idea of landscape as a 'historically specific' 'way of seeing the world'. He claims that the renaissance elite European, most especially Italian, strategically presented themselves and their social relations within the landscape, in paintings. Wylie asserts that Cosgrove's landscape idea is an epistemological position, underpinned by realism, where an independent subject interprets from a position of 'coherent detachment' (Wylie, 2007: 59). Such a position directly contrasts Ingold's (2000) dwelling perspective. Furthermore, the notion of manipulating landscape to manipulate social relations (Cosgrove, 1984) highlights the consideration of the landscape as more than a physical entity or a place of meaning and dwelling. That organisms can or do manipulate one another in the course of their ecological relations is conceivable in Ingold's (2000) dwelling perspective. Do communities shape their landscape or does the landscape shape them? Ingold (2000) would likely argue that both communities, as embedded in the landscape, and landscape shape one another. Ingold (2000) suggests that people perceive and interpret the environment differently not because they import cultural meaning into the landscape but because in everyday dwelling, what comes into perceptual focus and what doesn't, produces cultural knowledge. This in turn further informs how people dwell in the landscape – an insight that is of value in the subsequent interpretation of my own findings.

Ultimately landscape or place is personal and social (for example Tuan, 1977; Taylor, 2003; Dixon & Durrheim, 2004) - although Cosgrove's (1984) interpretation preferences the social. It is about how people belong within the environment and define themselves accordingly.

In this respect, Woodward's exploration of identity illuminates the importance of home as a place of deep meaning and attachment. Home, Woodward asserts, can take many forms. It can be the building one grew up in, a community or geographical area. The significance lies in the meaning of home as a place of belonging. Home, with its spatial and temporal dimensions, is desired and longed for by people because it represents safety, stability and shelter. Home is also, Woodward claims, symbolically important in the construction of identity. How people refer to themselves such as by nationality, tribe, community residence or as coming from a rural or urban background, reflects not only place but identity. This is reflected in identity narratives where home is often the starting point, linked to early life experience, and is often evoked to reinforce linkages to places of belonging. (Woodward, 2002)

Taylor (2010) asserts that regardless of people's mobility,

"place, and especially where someone lives, retains a special contemporary relevance for identity" (Taylor, 2010)

Taylor's (2010) study into women's lives, identity and place found that a) tradition, 'born and bred narratives', persisted as a desired ideal in their identity constructions in respect of place, b) 'new identities of place' which drew on 'opportunity and choice' were constructed alongside traditional narratives, and c) that the feeling of personal safety is significant in respect of feelings of belonging and 'being at home'. Similar in part to Taylor's findings (2010) is Giuliani's (2003) assertion that people can establish new homes or places of belonging when the meaning that a place has gains prominence in their identity construction and reconstruction. This sense of belonging or home as part of continuing and/or reconstructing identity to maintain or forge new identities is especially important in the Hout Bay context with its former politically determined social and spatial settlement character and identity determination and present day social and spatial experience of desegregation (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004: 456). As a consequence of this, as discussed in Chapter 1, all three communities of interest face old and new ways of

belonging. As such, the notions of identity and place explored in this Chapter are especially relevant to this study.

2.5.3 Ecological beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour

Ecological beliefs, values, attitudes and ethics

Identity, including ecological identity, as previously discussed, is about individuals and groups' beliefs, values and attitudes. It is about what makes them similar to other group members and different from other groups; identity is about what makes life meaningful. Clayton and Opatow (2003: 2) claim that studies about environmental identity, about beliefs, values and attitudes, give insights into how it mediates people's environmental behaviour. From a social self perspective, Giddens (1991: 54) asserts that in modernity, the determination of self is not about behaviour, nor about the reactions of others but is instead is about the capacity to narrate and re-narrate a coherent, meaningful story about who self is - a story which is also attentive to what goes on in the external world and as such is not 'wholly fictive'. As discussed earlier, social group identity involves the dynamics of self in respect of group membership. By extension one can argue that this dialogue of social self continues in the course of group membership.

Anthropocentric, biocentric and ecocentric views have been mentioned in several of the discussions in this Chapter. As this Chapter makes clear, the beliefs and values people hold of the environment and/or nature are diverse, conflicting, contextual, ambiguous and ambivalent, tacitly shared and explicitly and implicitly expressed. In short, they are more complex than this brief exploration of people's range of environmental beliefs and values might infer. In providing a brief discussion I hope to illustrate in what follows a few of the many and varied views that can inform those specific aspects of ecological identity that are especially relevant to the research questions formulated at the end of the Chapter.

Beliefs, values and attitudes are an ambivalent, contextual, contradictory, ambiguous mix of evaluations, serving to subjectively arrange the environment and to orientate people

therein (Billig, 1987; Potter & Wetherall, 1987; Dovidio, Kawakami & Beach, 2001). In their review of intergroup bias, Dovidio, Kawakami and Beach (2001) argue that attitudes are implicit, unconsciously held but easily accessed when faced with an object, and can become explicit, consciously held and expressed. Billig (1987) and Potter and Wetherall (1987) claim that beliefs and attitudes often come to the fore during debate and argument.

At the core of environmental beliefs and values are evaluations about existence. They appraise who, human and non-human, living and non-living, has the right to exist and for what purpose, as well as convey notions about the priority of existence rights. These beliefs and values also express environmental ethical positions, that is, what people consider to be right and wrong environmental behaviour (Miller & Spoolman, 2009). Ethical positions are deeply moral (Jamieson, 2008) and include an evaluation about who is considered part of the moral community (or not) – something Clayton and Opatow (2003: 8-12) raise in their definition of environmental identity. Moral ecological being implies a concern for the environment, including the way groups are immersed in the environment. Philosopher Bernard Williams (1995: 109) purports that concern for the environment and the moral questions this invokes are essentially of humans and for humans. His arguments forefront the issue of how humans live and on the conundrum of how human answers speak to the value of things that are valued intrinsically, for themselves rather than for human interests.

Values about the human and non-human environment are said to be intrinsic and/or utility orientated (Derr & McNamara, 2003: 3). The former concerns whether someone or something has value in itself, in its existence, while the latter refers to instrumental use (Derr & McNamara, 2003: 3). Jamieson refers to intrinsic valuation as the,

““gold standard” of morality” (2008: 69).

He asserts that what is of intrinsic value is about the key questions of what is of ultimate moral value (2008: 69). There is a range of possible human-non-human, individual, life

and earth centered value positions that people can assume (Lockwood, 1999; Miller & Spoolman, 2009). These include an extreme position of intrinsic value where nature is viewed as more valuable than human life (an ecosystem centered view), trade-off positions between the needs and perceived rights of people and nature, and an extreme anthropocentric position where human life is viewed as more valuable than nature (Lockwood, 1999).

Similar to Lockwood's (1999) intrinsic valuation of the environment, Milton (1999: 437) asserts that nature is 'sacred'. Milton (1999) claims that the non-human characteristic of nature is sacred because it is innocent and that nature's sacredness depends on its otherness to the cultural world of people. According to Milton (1999: 444), this view is based not on reason but on direct experiences, in that it is people's experiences that make nature sacred to them. From another view, Brady (1998) explores the utility value of nature from a biocentric stance. Aesthetic appreciation for nature, the valuing of nature as an amenity that provides pleasure, is described by Brady (1998) as a hedonistic model. Brady's (1998) alternative to this model is the 'situated aesthetic' or the disinterested subjects who, much like a jury, divorce themselves from their self-interests and nature's amenity value use. This results in an aesthetic appreciation that is sensitively evaluated with regard to the context and narrative of nature (Brady, 1998). However, Brady (1998) recognises that this viewpoint presents contradictory possibilities. For example, despite divorcing their desire to sail on the lake (amenity value), 'situated aesthetics' might still argue that the yachts provide an attractive, colourful contrast to the landscape within which the lake was embedded - using the lake, as would a 'hedonistic aesthetic' (Brady, 1998). One could deduce that these authors argue their values from a *a priori* environmental worldview assumptions.

Biocentrism advocates the intrinsic valuation of all forms of life, regardless of utility, and that all life forms have the right to exist. However, non-living forms are valued for their utility. Biocentrism encompasses a variety of positions, from those protecting species on

the basis of their perceived hierarchical right to exist, to the preservation of elite species (Miller, 1998). These 'right to exist' hierarchies pose an ethical dilemma for people as a community and as individuals; whose hierarchy? what determines position in the hierarchy? who decides? (Miller & Spoolman, 2009). Taylor, a biocentric advocate, purports that nature or the 'wild communities of life' are worthy of people's moral concern on the basis of intrinsic value and value inherent in the network of 'Earth's Community of Life' (1986: 13).

Ecocentrism focuses on the valuation of earth's biodiverse community, human and non-human, living and non-living, and the ecological processes therein (Miller, 1998: 750-752). There is an emphasis on everything including ecosystems which Jamieson, along with other scholars, questions in terms of whether everything does have moral rights (2008: 149). Notably, while Ingold's (2000: 5) dwelling perspective views humans and non-humans as one organism community he also declares that intuition – an almost pre-ethical evaluation – underpins the everyday practice of dwelling in the environment. One of the best-known examples of ecocentric views is the aforementioned Deep Ecology position which asks deep questions of ecology and life and advocates holistic, emotional and reflective dwelling (see Section 2.5.2).

Eckersley (1998) argues that the crux of the ecocentric critique is that of human racism, which,

“manifests when a reconciliation of human and nonhuman needs is possible but is nonetheless concealed and/or denied” (Eckersley, 1998: 165).

Human racism and non-racism is framed by a moral perspective (Eckersley, 1998). The tendency for people to rescue or defend, first and foremost, what is familiar and personal to them, ahead of for example nonhuman species, does not make them prejudicial towards others or less familiar; it is not an indication of social or ecological prejudice. However, human racism does exist where people are confronted with a situation wherein

the needs of human and non-humans can be accommodated and are not in the interests of human progress or welfare, (Eckersley, 1998).

As discussed, anthropocentrism, with its focus on human interests, is located on the opposite side of the spectrum to biocentrism and ecocentrism. However this does not mean people who are anthropocentric do not value nature or try to conserve it. In espousing a broader perspective, beyond anthropocentrism, Williams (1995: 234) notes that how people are in the environment concerns both themselves and at times (for example through conservation) other non-human interests. In this circumstance, attitudes-values are not anthropocentric yet are of human origin. Despite this moral intention, Williams (1995: 240) claims, a paradox arises - that people's wish to preserve nature as untouched arises from having already touched it in the act of preservation.

These positions highlight the complexity of environmental beliefs and values. How people define themselves (and others) in respect of the environment concerns their beliefs and values about the human and non-human community/ies. Such views also present an opportunity for people to define themselves and others ecologically and morally. An extension of this argument concerns the relationship between beliefs, values and attitudes and behaviour. As will be discussed, this relationship has also proven complex and at times difficult to fully explain such that a clear understanding has proven illusive.

From attitudes to behaviour

Environmental sociology forerunners Dunlap and van Liere (1978, 1984) introduced the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) to appraise social and physical environmental relations. It comprised twelve Likert scale attitudinal items, concerning environmental issues, in a questionnaire format. The scale initially focused on air and water pollution considerations (Dunlap & van Liere, 1978, 1984). Reflective of changing experiences of the environment and people's perceptions thereof, scale considerations now include

global climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and sustainable development (Lalonde & Jackson, 2002).

Dunlap and van Liere stress the fragile link between environmental attitudes reflected in their NEP findings and environmentally responsible behaviour. Furthermore, they suggest that other non-NEP beliefs and values might hold greater sway over peoples' activities. Additionally, they consider that people may have answered the questionnaire with a varying and possibly poor understanding of personal and societal implications of the NEP. (Dunlap & van Liere, 1978)

Despite its continued popularity, Lalonde and Jackson (2002) assert that the NEP scale may have outlived its usefulness. They feel it is anachronistically worded and fails to account for the changes in orientations and an increasingly 'sophisticated' understanding of the environment (2002: 28-29). Additionally, Stern, Dietz and Guagnano (1995) declare that such studies fail to incorporate social-psychological (model) theory of attitude-behaviour relationships. Even so, Stern *et al.* (1995) acknowledge that in their social-psychological exploration of such relationships they have found it difficult to establish a simplified theoretical causal relationship linking beliefs-value-attitude.

In contrast to such scales and models are various qualitative studies on environmental beliefs and values. An example is Schelhas and Pfeffer's (2005) qualitative, semi-structured interview study, which explores the beliefs and values of rural people, living in five villages next to forests in Costa Rica. Significantly, this study challenges notions that only more affluent people or nations are environmentally concerned. Schelhas and Pfeffer's analysis suggests that 'global environmental discourses' critically inform these rural people's ways of thinking and speaking about the forests. The conservation discourse, for example, has replaced earlier frontier views of the forests as a resource to be exploited. However, this discourse, together with the national discourse of development, is also at odds with their livelihood needs. As a consequence, they express

'mediating discourses' where both conservation and rural livelihood practices are acknowledged. Ultimately, a particular environmental discourse about the forests emerges, one that is grounded in their emergent local beliefs and values, at this time in their history and social development, (Schelhas & Pfeffer, 2005).

Gaspar's (2008) qualitative interview study of local community perceptions of a marine protected area (MPA), in Southern Mozambique shares a few key findings with those of Schelhas and Pfeffer (2005). Gaspar's (2008) study also resonates with this study given that part of the Hout Bay surrounds includes the Karbonkelberg restricted zone MPA where numerous residents undertake livelihood and leisure activities. The MPA of interest in Gaspar's (2008) study is part of the Lubombo Trans-frontier Conservation Area. MPA's are underpinned by sustainable development commitments. Gaspar's (2008) findings illustrate the complexity of people's environmental beliefs, values and attitudes. For example, while the local community were found to have a low awareness of the establishment of the MPA, when made aware of it, they expressed positive attitudes towards its potential contribution towards biodiversity conservation (Gaspar, 2008). However, they also expressed negative attitudes about the MPA, related to their perception that it would impede their access to and use of marine resources (Gaspar, 2008). When discussing what the MPA priorities should be, their attitudes focused on local community benefits, such as job creation and sustained access to and sale of marine resources, in line with biodiversity conservation goals (Gaspar, 2008). These findings suggest that in this context at least, the local community beliefs and values are anthropocentric. Marine resources are viewed in terms of livelihood utility but at the same time the community appreciates the value of protecting biodiversity. The latter view leans towards biocentrism or, possibly, if earth focused, ecocentrism. However, I contend such views are ultimately anthropocentric, in that it is underpinned by desired and continued generational benefits to the community. Gaspar (2008) also touches on the relationship between environmental beliefs, values and attitudes and behaviour. Although he does not explore this fully, his findings suggest that if the local community is involved in the

determination of the MPA's priorities and benefit from the MPA, they will behave positively, supporting the biodiversity conservation goals.

Quantitative and qualitative studies attempt to ascertain people's environmental beliefs and values because it is hoped that they can tell us more about how people do and will behave in or towards the environment. This is despite findings which suggest only a tentative connection between belief and behaviour. Such findings challenge scholars to learn more. Oskamp (2002) argues that environmental attitudes are in part responsible for environmental problems. In a world where the environment has come to be about risk, and where society's development and the environment are and have been historically intertwined, it is extremely valuable to have such insights about environmental beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour. Schelhas and Pfeffer (2005) and Gaspar's (2008) studies suggest that forest and marine resources are important to the respective local communities not only to sustain their livelihoods, their existence, but also because of a valuation of life's diversity. These local communities attempt to narrate these views within their identity construction. These views are about community membership and identity and as such they are personal and social and have emotional significance. They reflect, albeit not always transparently, how communities orientate themselves within the environment and the significance of doing so. This study does not deal with behaviour as such but the act of defining and being of a group within the environment can be regarded as a form of identity behaviour – which concerns beliefs, attitudes, emotions and values. Exploring how communities or groups define themselves in respect of the environment offers up possibilities as to their everyday social and ecological engagement and how environment becomes a meaningful place.

2.6 Conclusion and research questions

Studies of the environment tend to be ontologically divided essentially between constructionist and realist positions. In this chapter, I present the philosophical orientation of this study as interpretivist, social constructionist, adopting a mild constructionist stance.

Such a position does not refute the existence of 'real' environmental problems but rather focuses exploration on people's dynamic interpretation of themselves in respect of the environment, as well as their dynamic interpretations of environment. The stance adopted in this study is also appreciative of symbolic interactionism – a major sociological perspective which considers self and society to be intimately and dynamically connected, such that self is informed by the experience of being in the world and vice versa; interpretations of the world or environment are informed by self. Identity and meaning are presented as social processes. Notably, some authors assert that there is some element of self that remains independent while others argue that the self and social self exist in tension and still others, in the postmodern tradition, argue that self is fragmented.

There are essentially two aspects that inform this study and consequently the literature review, namely environment and identity; symbolic interactionism connects the two. In speaking first to environment, the modest literature review highlights the plural, varied and ambiguous interpretations of nature as part of and/or as separate from notions of environment, where environment is interpreted as including the presence and activities of humans. A key consideration in this review was Ingold's (2000) dwelling perspective which is founded on the premise that humans and non-humans are organisms perceptually immersed within the environment, engaged in an ecology of relations of which social relations are a part (Ingold, 2000). This contrasts familiar perspectives of a social environment and a non-human environment. In respect of this study, what is important is how groups themselves orientate themselves in respect of the environment, that is, as immersed within the environment, engaged and looking around them, or as observers from the outside.

An inescapable human condition is that we are social. Historical and modern accounts of human society from a Western view present humans as utilising the environment for their own goals of progress, where nature is strategically positioned on the outskirts of the social everyday environment; Ingold (2000) in turn argues that there is only history – one history for humans and non-humans. Environment has increasingly become interpreted as

problematic and framed by environment and progress discourses. A central theme in modernity or postmodernity is that the modern project of science and progress has resulted in severe consequences to how we define ourselves and dwell in the environment. Dwelling has become risky – uncertain, unknown, global and rapidly changing. Knowing ourselves has increasingly become a reflexive project. Bauman (2001, 2004) asserts that in 'liquid modern times' people are caught between their own self making projects and being part of a community. By this view, a long term commitment to any one identity is risky in a rapidly changing world.

Locally, Hout Bay is risky because of non-human ecological processes, of which fire is a key component, as well as human and non-human ecological relations in which fire arises as a fundamental risk to dwelling. Hout Bay, as a South African context, is also risky. The influence of both apartheid and democratic rule are evident in Hout Bay's social and ecological relations and spatial organisation. Increasing development is also visible in Hout Bay (see Chapter 1). How people dwell in Hout Bay and choose to define themselves in respect of the environment is tangibly under review. Recent political circumstances have transformed the dynamics of dwelling and identity from that of certain, known and imposed position to a position of uncertainty, that of the unknown yet also that of possibilities.

In reviewing identity in this Chapter, I focused on group identity – the interest of this study – and in particular explored an expanded version of Social Identity Theory (SIT/SCT), as well as the social practice of everyday dwelling. Key aspects of SIT/SCT were the importance of group as a positive experience to and of social self, the ease with which social selves become group around shared notions of meaningful attributes, and the strategic use of stereotyping in internal and external group (in and out groups) defining dynamics. Bourdieu's (1977, 1986, 1990a, 1990b) concepts of *habitus*, social fields and capital underpinned by the notion that meaning and definition arise in dwelling practice – or subsist in it – were also explored. Notably these concepts suggest that dwelling and

identity are strategic, competitive, social pursuits (and engagements). The places of dwelling and identity central to this study are ones where meaning can be tacit and formally known; where history (especially childhood experiences of being) have persistent influence regarding how people dwell and are defined; where ways of being in practice are slow to change; and where, in challenging different dwelling contexts, who people are and how they people dwell and experience their everyday environment can be drawn into a crises of meaning and practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a, 1990b). People desire to have a better life and central to that pursuit is their accruelement of different kinds and balances of capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

As Ingold (2000) argues, such social dynamics do not happen in a social vacuum but are instead embedded and engaged in ecological relations. In this study, I have adopted the concept of ecological identity, which in the literature is similar to environmental identity. A broad conceptualisation of ecological identity is that it is a dynamic interpretation concerning how people (but conceivably also non-humans) define themselves in respect of their human and non-human relations and surroundings. In terms of the social aspect, it has the potential to involve the social dynamics of social identity, as noted above. Notably, how people interpret environment (and/or nature) is a critical part of their ecological identity definition – it concerns their ecological orientation. In this respect, I have also presented a brief review of notions of place, space, landscape and identity - some taken from the geographical tradition, some from the psychological tradition with social and anthropological perspectives included as well. Key to this discussion is how people through dwelling, experience and interpretation, find meaningful place within the environment. What is a central interest throughout is how people present themselves as belonging to and of place, how they define place as meaningful and how place/s do or do not continue to contribute to constructions of identity.

Identity, social and/or ecological is deeply emotional, personal and social. Some authors present a moral or ethical dimension to ecological/environmental identity. Ingold (2000)

argues that the direct immediate practice of dwelling and being is pre-ethical. Researchers typically strive to understanding peoples environmental beliefs, values and attitudes, and some the relationship between these orientations and behaviour. A range of positions exist from anthropological on the one side, where people prioritise human wellbeing and desires over the non-human world, and biocentrism and ecocentrism on the other side. However, quantitative attitudinal scales and psychological models have struggled to prove how such positions link to environmental behaviour – if at all. Qualitative studies, such as how communities define themselves in respect of the environment, have provided deep insight into how groups connect to the environment, making places and aspects of it important to who they are. However, this does not neatly translate into consistent environmental behaviour. Nevertheless, as in this study, to understand and gain rich insight into how groups define themselves in respect of the environment, opens up possibilities for becoming aware of and attuned to the complex ways in which people dwell within the environment and define and continue to define themselves ecologically, and very possibly, socially.

The central research question that evolved from the review of the Hout Bay (South Africa) study context and the literature review is:

How are group ecological identities constructed?

This is underpinned by the following research questions:

- How is environment understood and used by different communities to construct their group ecological identity?
- What are the key factors that have shaped group ecological identity?
- In the new South African political circumstance, how are groups maintaining and/or redefining themselves in respect of the environment?

Given the dynamism and complexity of most societies, it is inevitable that the nature of identity cannot be tethered completely. However, these questions emphasise the

significance of the environment which, judging by many discourses at international and local levels, is a key factor in shaping the extent to which societies are at ease with themselves, the strength of their claims to identity and, critically, how diverse identities interact. Pragmatically, these questions also provide the starting point for designing the methodological framework and approach which is discussed in Chapter 3 and, of course, the analysis in later chapters.

3. Methodology and method

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I orientated this study philosophically and discussed a selection of key literature regarding environment and identity of greatest relevance to this study and its particular interest in the ecological identity of different community groups. This chapter discusses the chosen qualitative methodology, data collection methods and analytical approach. Issues of ethics, validity and reliability are also discussed at appropriate points in what follows.

3.2 Qualitative methodology

It is well established that quantitative and qualitative methodological research paradigms are essentially divided over the perception of reality – how reality exists (ontology) and how it can come to be known (epistemology). This is reflected in the division of realist and constructionist environmental studies as discussed in Chapter 2. Of course, there has been much debate in the scientific community as to the soundness of qualitative research, especially as an independent strategy. Indeed some researchers employ a pragmatic quantitative-qualitative approach (Snape & Spencer, 2003: 15-18). However, Hammersley cautions that debating which paradigm trumps the other,

“stultifies debate and hampers progress” (1992: 182),

obscuring the more important decision which is to select the most suitable paradigm and associated methods for a given research topic.

This study adopted a qualitative paradigm for exploring groups’ constructions of their ecological identity because it offers an interpretivist way of accessing the richness of their constructions and an understanding of ecological identity as a phenomenon. This approach was also appealing because it offers flexibility, given that its research design is malleable to evolving research conditions (Silverman, 2006: 68).

3.2.1 A basic interpretive qualitative approach

Specifically, this study employs a basic interpretive, qualitative methodology. Merriam (2002: 6-7) describes a basic interpretive, qualitative approach as interested in understanding participants' sense-making of a phenomenon, where meaning is 'mediated' through the researcher, where the strategy is inductive, and where the outcome is descriptive. Although this study is not specifically orientated to the phenomenological, according to Merriam (2002: 7), all qualitative research is infused with phenomenological thinking.

This approach is especially attractive to this study with its interest in how groups define themselves ecologically and in their interpretations of environment. As such, an inductive approach was of particular appeal because it begins with data collection and awareness of theory and from that point interpretations and contributions to theory evolve. Combining the interpretive with a broad phenomenological dimension was also attractive because of this study's interest in groups' everyday type understandings of themselves and the environment. In this respect, this approach especially facilitates access to groups' meanings. Even so, there is an acknowledgement of the mercurial character of meaning; where it is,

"is not a thing or a substance but an activity. This makes meaning difficult to grasp. Meanings are constantly changing, and are produced and reproduced in each social situation with slightly different nuances and significances depending on the nature of the context as a whole" (Ezzy, 2002: 3).

Qualitative research is conducted in the life world, in engagement with others; it is a 'situated activity' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 3). Therefore, the caution to the qualitative researcher such as myself is that one cannot presume,

"to be able to present an objective, noncontested account of the other's experiences" (Denzin, 1997: xiii).

Indeed, all interpretation is,

“unavoidably conditioned by cultural, institutional and, interactional contingencies” (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997: vi).

The appreciation that meaning is social and dynamic and that it embodies cultural values is recognised by the narrative proponent Riessman, who refers to meaning-making and ordering of individual experience as,

“constructions [which] typically mesh with a community of life stories, “deep structures” about the nature of life itself” (1993: 2).

As a regular Hout Bay resident and as a researcher whose research was located in Hout Bay, it was impossible not to be aware of community moods and activities, whether from personal conversations, media or demonstrations. By being curious, empathic and critically aware as a researcher, I attempted to enter the everyday dwelling world of those Hout Bay community residents who participated in this study. Typically, phenomenological studies strive to ‘bracket’ the researcher’s understanding in an effort to access participant understanding (Patton, 2002: 111). This study does not privilege participant understanding to this extent. Rather, it settles on appreciating the role I play in the co-construction of meaning, together with the research participants. This is similar to Holstein and Gubrium’s (1995) active interview perspective, which views interviews as a social engagement and the outputs thereof as social products.

A range of methodological issues pertaining to the specifics of my own case study were also considered when deciding that a qualitative approach would be the best research strategy. These include the,

- different cultures of and home languages spoken by Hout Bay’s different communities (Chapter 1),
- multifaceted and distinct experiences of identity and dwelling of different communities, as a consequence of South Africa’s social history (Chapter 1),
- varying literacy and education levels within and between communities,

- varying access to different communities and members therein, for example, due to work commitments outside Hout Bay such as fishermen and those working in the city; for those less affluent, reliance on public transport; lack of phones and post boxes, especially with respect to informal dwellers (although this is rapidly changing); and the proportion of Valley dwellers, usually foreigners, who are only resident in Hout Bay for part of each year.

A qualitative approach was attractive in light of these considerations, most especially because it facilitates participants fuller expression of their meanings by providing a space in which to present comprehensive (Bryman, 2004) and negotiated (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Goffman, 1990) meanings. As discussed in Chapter 2, environment and identity are notions which are complicated in interpretation and in a group context involve processes of negotiation. Such a space also allows for people for whom English is a second language to more fully convey their meanings.

Ultimately, the primary focus of this research is contextual, in that it aims to describe ecological identity as constructed in a particular context and to describe how it is manifested. This in itself is a sufficient basis to rely only on qualitative evidence (Ritchie, 2003). There are additional reasons why a qualitative approach is preferable. These arise when the phenomenon being studied is ill-defined or not well understood, deeply rooted, complex, specialist, delicate or intangible, and sensitive or volatile (Ritchie, 2003: 31-34).

Exploring these aspects in respect of this study I argue the following: –

- As discussed in Chapter 1, group identity is especially topical in South Africa with its history of identity politics and recent dramatic political change to democratic government – where people now have the right to choose how to define themselves and how and where to dwell. It is significant that local identity studies have tended to focus on exploring the social world rather than as in this study the broader human and non-human context. In the main, as Clayton and Opatow (2003: 2-3) assert, environmental (ecological) identity is only beginning to be

explored. As such, our understanding of group ecological identity in this context is limited;

- As discussed in Chapter 2, environment and identity tend to be complex and tacitly understood. Therefore ecological identity and key concepts of environment and identity can be said to be deeply rooted, complex and fragile or intangible in their presentation;
- Ritchie (2003: 33) contends that people or groups may have different, specialist roles in society that may be of particular interest. From a slightly different perspective, I argue, in respect of South Africa's political history (Chapter 1) and the diversity of its communities, different South African communities have had particular (or specialist) roles in South African society and also have dwelt and continue to dwell in particular ways in the environment;
- It is difficult to know what part of the research may be sensitive or volatile to participants. However, I did know from living in Hout Bay, and from my talking and reading, that the right for all people to dwell (land tenure) in Hout Bay is a topical, sensitive and volatile subject. This is also evidenced in Oelfose's (1994) study of Hout Bay community conflict and local community newspaper articles and letters (Chapter 1; Appendix 1).

3.3 Method

This section presents the motivations underpinning the choice of research methods, focusing on those methods selected and explored during the pilot study and subsequently adopted in the main study. It should first be noted that this study is ultimately a case study, which can in itself be considered to be the main method. As noted in Section 3.2.1, this study adopts what Merriam (2002: 6-7) called a basic interpretative approach. Notably, Merriam (2002: 6-10) identifies eight such approaches, including that of the case study. I argue that this study adopts a basic interpretative approach with respect to its interest in a particular phenomenon, namely group ecological identity. As such, it is also a case study which aims to provide an 'intensive description' (Merriam, 2002: 8) of group

ecological identity in a particular place (Hout Bay) that is geographically defined or 'bounded' (Merriam, 2002: 8). Similarly, Stake (1995) notes a case study is a something of 'special interest',

"the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case" (1995: xi);

where the emphasis is on understanding it in detail. Although Yin (2009: 2) talks about collecting multiple sources of evidence as a characteristic of this method, this study focuses on three communities constructions of who they are. Nevertheless, it does explore in depth the phenomenon of group ecological identity in a 'real-life context' where the,

"boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009: 18).

3.3.1 Choosing a method/s

I was initially unsure as to the type and exact format of the supporting method/s to use in this study. This uncertainty pertained to the complexities of the Hout Bay and South African research context, as well as the key concepts of ecological identity, social identity and environment. To resolve this uncertainty two interview methods were explored in the pilot study (Section 3.4). As will be discussed in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.4, I explored individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups as possible data collection methods.

Consistent with the interpretivist constructionist frame of this study and the interest in people's understandings of their world, qualitative interviews were considered (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002). Qualitative interviews give people the space to make explicit what is implicit,

"to articulate their tacit perceptions, feelings and understandings" (Arksey & Knight, 1999: 32).

A research interview context is not natural however, as Taylor (2010) argues, participants do not present free fictions; instead they draw on their stories and those in wider circulation in society. Qualitative interviews also provide a space in which to develop empathy – where one can develop a better understanding of research participants' positions from their perspective (Patton, 2002: 52). Kvale (1996: 66) notes that qualitative interviews are sensitive to participants' meanings and responsive. Notably, May (1997: 115) cautions there should also be critical distance between the interviewer and interviewee. Additionally, Silverman (2006: 132) cautions that researchers need to be critical about the appropriateness and value of interview data. For my own research, because of time and financial constraints, I needed to review the advantage of small sample sizes versus the effort and time involved in analysing rich qualitative data.

An additional attraction of qualitative semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus groups was the facilitation of the meaning of the questions and responses, rather than the wording of the questions and responses to be conveyed, thus providing a more meaningful research inquiry (Mishler, 1986a). Although there is resonance between these two methods they are markedly different, in that the former is about the individual (social self) and the latter about the group (social group). However, Kitzinger and Barbour (1999: 4-6) note that through wider interaction, focus groups can illuminate meanings that are obscured in individual interviews. Furthermore, this research does not aim to determine a 'real truth' in what is said, rather the interest is on what and how social groups construct or perform their particular social truths. Holstein and Gubrium view qualitative interview accounts as 'actively constructed' (1995), declaring that,

"the respondent can hardly 'spoil' what he or she is, in effect, subjectively creating"(Gubrium & Holstein,1997:117).

Gubrium and Holstein (1997) further stress that meaning is co-constructed by interviewee and interviewer.

Part of this activity of construction, especially in a group context but also in a one on one semi-structured interview, is the notion of performance (Goffman, 1990; Riessman, 2008). Participants perform their meaning and in so doing are attentive to the presentation of their identities. Goffman (1990) presents the self as strategically managing different aspects of self, within different group contexts. In these contexts, the self desires the approval of others in the group. However, this is not always possible when the beliefs, values and attitudes of the self strongly disagree with the more widely held consensual group position. Goffman (1990) uses the analogy of drama as a means of understanding the social interaction of the self. The main thrust of his work is the performances people prepare for and put on in various social contexts – what he calls face to face interaction. Performances are governed by an interactional '*modus vivendi*', that is, an understanding of the reciprocal rules of engagement (1990: 21). For example, each participant in a group is expected to suppress their feelings in the spirit of maintaining group consensus. In return, they are given the courtesy of expressing their position on matters that are of vital importance to them. Consensus status is a reflection of whose claims the participants are able to justify or rationalise, and not necessarily a reflection of what they really think. This status quo is maintained through constant rationalisation by participants of their position in relation to the consensus status, until they are unable to rationalise the extent to which the consensus status over-reaches their position. At this point, consensus breaks down and a participant expresses disagreement. The breakdown of consensus is seen as a strong expression of a person's identity, clearly demarcating their boundaries of sameness or agreement and difference or disagreement. People can be influenced, through social interaction, to change their positions of self as they learn the range of what is socially accepted and what is not, given the social context. This infers that people present and perform different faces depending on the social context and the feedback. There are therefore several identities or partial identities on which social actors could draw upon in different settings. Goffman's (1990) performing self offers critical insights into how people engage in a research context and how meaning and especially consensual positions are determined.

A discussion of the two qualitative interview methods follows; this is supported by detailed reporting of the pilot (Section 3.4) and main (Section 3.5) study.

3.3.2 Qualitative semi-structured, in-depth interviews

By convention, semi-structured qualitative interviews follow a loosely structured format that is informed by a topic or interview guide. This format is intended to facilitate open, deep responses and interaction between the interviewer and interviewee enable the interview to respond to the context and emergent data, while remaining focused on the research interest (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). A topic guide is supported by prompts; emphasises the focus on topics rather than specific questions and encourages consistency between sessions, ensuring that key themes are covered regardless of the potentially different and diverse accounts that may be produced in each session (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003: 115-116). Additionally, May (1997: 119) emphasises that the application of a topic guide should promote 'trust and cooperation' to achieve rich data – a point the author makes with respect to focus groups but which has clear relevance to this qualitative interview method as well. This study's topic guide is discussed in detail in Section 3.4 and 3.5.

3.3.3 Focus groups

Focus groups are,

“group discussions exploring a specific set of issues...involves some kind of collective activity – such as...debating a set of questions ... are distinguished from the broader category of group interviews by the explicit use of group interaction to generate data...participants talk to one another: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes, and commenting on each others' experiences and points of view. At the very least, research participants create an audience for one another” (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999: 4).

Focus groups are typically designed to,

“elicit something less fixed, definite and coherent that lies beneath attitudes, something that the researcher may call feelings, or responses, or experiences, or worldviews” (Myers & Macnaghten, 1999: 174).

As such they offer a space for,

“exploring people’s experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns” (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999: 5).

This claim is supported by a range of authors. Waterton and Wynne (1999) further assert that focus groups can access the highly complex ways in which people construct environmental perceptions such as risks from the nuclear industry. They contend that focus groups expose the relational social context, active construction of attitudes and the negotiation of trust between participants and researchers.

Focus groups’ spontaneity of expression, evaluations and participant influence tend towards natural social engagement (Finch & Lewis, 2003: 171-172). However, Bloor, Frankland, Robson and Thomas (2001: 5-6, 57) emphasise that while focus groups can expose the ‘rarely articulated’ normative order of ‘everyday life’ that informs ‘behaviours and opinions’, they are naturalistic not natural. Nevertheless, Bloor *et al.* (2001: 6-7) conclude that focus groups can access the social relational context between group members, for example of a community. They also note, citing Holstein and Gubrium (1995) that group participants reference the stock of indigenous terms and categories prevalent in their community, thereby providing the researcher with access to the nuances of in-group conversation and meaning.

Morgan (1996, 1997) contends that a clear distinction between group interviews and focus groups cannot be determined. Group interviews vary along a continuum from formal questioning to informal questions and discussions, the latter of which tends to focus groups (Morgan, 1996, 1997). Debatably, what distinguishes group interviews from focus groups is the emphasis on or access to lively group interaction and generated meaning (Morgan, 1997; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Finch & Lewis, 2003). As further mentioned in Section 3.3.1, people engage dynamically in an interview/focus group context – typically performing their identity and meaning (see Goffman, 1990). In terms of understanding the dynamics of focus groups, Finch and Lewis (2003: 174-176) draw on Tuckman and

Jenson's (1977) model of how small groups engage, to note that focus groups move from an initial 'forming' phase through to the closure of the group. In the forming phase, the social self is more evident and tentative, managing presentation, much like Goffman's (1990) performing self. Group dynamics then shift to intra-group challenges, the establishment of group, performance of group and finally the closure of group. Understanding these dynamics provides insights into data generation and how to manage focus groups (Finch & Lewis, 2003).

Focus groups are directed by a,

“basic outline of key questions” (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999: 11),

or topic guide, as introduced in Section 3.3.2. Unlike traditional qualitative interviews, the researcher acts as a moderator, gently and responsively guiding the focus group (Bloor *et al.*, 2001). Finch and Lewis (2003: 180) suggest that the researcher moderate, as in constrain and focus the engagement, and facilitate interaction, carefully balancing group and individual dynamics. Maintaining control over the session is critical yet group interaction needs to be sufficiently loose or free to facilitate the production of rich data (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999: 12-14). Ultimately it is about skilful and experienced moderation, exploring group meaning and being alert to sensitivities and tacit meanings, and engaging the group and social selves (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch & Lewis, 2003).

3.4 Pilot study

The pilot study aimed to explore interpretations of environment and constructions of ecological identity, plus the aforementioned possible interview methods as well as methods of analysis. Its ultimate intent was to better inform the development of research questions and the main study research design, most especially with respect to method and data analysis. This study was conducted in Hout Bay between February and June 2002. It comprised one focus group with six Valley community participants and three

semi-structured, qualitative interviews with Valley and Harbour community participants. Of these sessions, one of the focus group participants also subsequently participated in one of the three individual interviews. Appendices 3 and 4 provide details of the participants and interview/focus group sessions.

3.4.1 Recruitment

Strategic, non-representative samples using snowball and flow population sampling

The small and strategically selective non-representative samples favoured in this study are typical of qualitative inquiry and of pilot studies. It is the selection of particular characteristics of a population that makes non-representative sampling attractive to small, in-depth studies with an interest in the particular (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003: 78). Mason (1996: 91) highlights the intensive analytical advantage qualitative research has over quantitative research, noting that the large sample sizes required by quantitative research preclude such analysis. Nonetheless, Mason astutely argues for robustness in qualitative research, commenting that qualitative researchers,

“should produce social explanations which are generalizable in some way, or which have wider resonance...[and should not be] satisfied with producing explanations which are idiosyncratic or particular to the limited empirical parameters of their study” (1996: 6).

In this context, snowball sampling identifies and selects community members who are in some manner linked or networked (Neuman, 2000: 199). I opportunistically combined snowball sampling with what Ritchie *et al.* refer to as ‘flow population’ sampling,

“where samples are generated by approaching people (2003: 94)”,

in particular locations or settings. Informal networks of local Kronendal primary school parents were approached, as were networks of people directly or indirectly associated with the Atlantic Boat Club and the Yacht club, as well as considered elders and other community leaders in the Harbour community. People were contacted usually by referral, either by telephone or face-to-face.

Snowball sampling is criticised as potentially compromising sample diversity and quality (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 94). For example, the conscious and unconscious selection criteria and identification of participants may be affected by those in the chain of linkages, with the risk that similar people are chosen. However, this study on ecological identity, while working towards natural everyday engagement, also worked at achieving a critical social distance between participants, thus ensuring a measure of sample diversity and quality. Examples of this in recruitment work include working along a referral chain or networks and even shifting to linked social networks, so as to avoid, as far as possible, the selection of too similar and/or closely connected people.

Criteria

The main recruitment criterion was that members from the same Hout Bay community (in this instance, the Valley community) were selected to participate in a focus group. This was consistent with the study interest in groups' ecological identity constructions of themselves. Other criteria which were loosely applied – so as not to excessively restrict recruitment – concerned gender and age. The idea was to achieve a fair measure of equitable gender representation and a range of ages in the focus group and between individual interviews. In part, these criteria aimed to achieve diversity within participant recruitment; they were also informed by the literature. Gender, for example, is regarded as significant in respect of focus group dynamics where men and women are found to interact differently (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Van Liere and Dunlap (1980) explain the relationship between age and environmental concern as one related to the idealism of youth, which fades with time.

Ultimately, recruitment criteria were guided by the need to facilitate participant engagement that produced useful and valid data. This was constrained in part, and more especially in respect of the individual interviews, by the many ways in which I could be viewed by participants, including my community group, gender, age and academic

interest. Moreover, Stewart *et al.* assert in respect of focus groups that this is impacted by the extent to which participants,

“feel comfortable about openly communicating their ideas, views, or opinions” (2007: 19).

They list intrapersonal factors such as demographic factors, physical characteristics and personality, and interpersonal factors such as group cohesiveness, group compatibility, social power and group participation (including non verbal contributions) as key factors that potentially influence group dynamics.

Additional criteria were that all participants had to be resident (living) in Hout Bay at the time of the study, they needed to be members of one of the three communities' of interest and older than 20 years of age, as well as sufficiently conversant in English. Children and adolescents were excluded to avoid further complexity. The reasons for this include, a) the developing identity of children and adolescents; b) the social dynamics and ethical concerns that could potentially be invoked as a consequence of combining adults with children and adolescents in an interactional research context, and c) the disparity in apartheid dwelling experiences between adults and those under 21 years, noting that South Africa had only been democratically governed for approximately eight years at the time of the pilot study.

Focus group size and number

Focus group size is an important consideration in respect of balancing efforts to facilitate rich engagement versus moderation capacity. The original intention was to recruit between six and seven participants for the focus group and three or four participants for the individual interviews. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999: 8-9), contend that the often prescriptive 'eight to twelve' focus group participants is too large a group for sociological research. They suggest a preferred focus group size of between three and six participants. Others suggest that focus groups should typically comprise six to eight participants (Finch & Lewis, 2003: 192-193; Bloor *et al.*, 2001: 26). In choosing a group

size, I considered not only the literature but also the specifics of this research. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, the ecological identity of Hout Bay and South African communities are not well understood, deeply rooted, complex, intangible, 'specialist' and sensitive (Ritchie, 2003). Varying proficiency in English was also a consideration. Other practical considerations were logistics, audio-taping, degree of engagement and the depth of data required (Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch & Lewis, 2003).

A desired focus group size of between six and eight was determined for this study, with a further three participants for the individual interviews. In the end, the focus group comprised six Valley residents, of which there were three males and three females and myself (female). Ages ranged from between 31 years to older than 50 years. The three semi-structured qualitative interviews involved a 50+ year old Harbour resident female, a 21-30 year old Valley resident male and a Valley resident female, aged 31-40 years, who had also participated in the focus group session. In the Valley focus group, participants had lived in Hout Bay from less than three years to more than 16 years. In the semi-structured qualitative interviews, the Harbour female participant had lived in Hout Bay all her life, the Valley male had lived there less than three years, and the Valley female, for more than 16 years. Further demographic detail is presented in Appendix 3. This information is sourced from the baseline questionnaire (Appendix 2) which all participants were requested to complete at the end of the sessions.

3.4.2 Session dates, times and venues

During recruitment, people were asked to provide a few convenient dates, times and venues within a three week frame for the research engagement. In finalising the session arrangements, drawing on people's submissions, participants were given several venue options including the local library, Atlantic Boat Club meeting room and my office meeting room, as well as the option of morning, afternoon or evening sessions. This differed slightly in respect of the focus group, where the consensus of all participants regarding date, time and venue was required. Participants were contacted two weeks, and again

between two and four days, prior to the sessions to confirm participation and arrangements, and to answer any further questions. All sessions were held, albeit at different session periods, in my home office meeting room. While this may present social power issues, I argue that this is offset by the sensitivity of the research in this context and by the practicalities of participants' choices. Details of the research sessions, including dates, times, venues and duration are provided in Appendix 4.

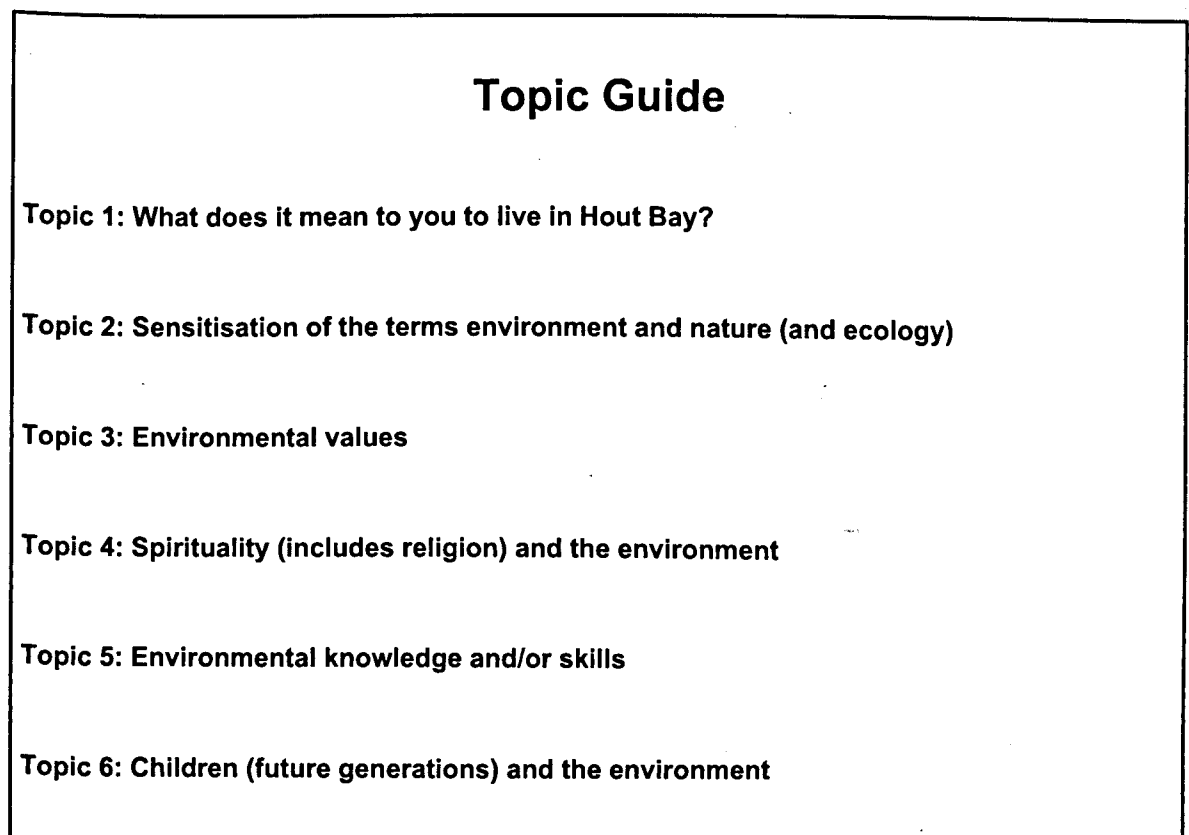
3.4.3 Topic guide

The focus group and individual interview sessions were directed using the same topic guide (see Figure 3.1). However, how the topics were presented and the responses explored differed as a function of group and one-on-one individual interview dynamics.

An effective focus group and/or interview should cover a range of relevant topics, provide specific data, encourage in-depth expression and interaction, and recognise the personal context amidst group engagement and meaning construction (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1990). These objectives, together with the literature and research questions (see Chapters 1 and 2), provided critical direction during the development and use of the topic guide. According to Arthur and Nazroo (2003), a topic guide should be succinct, general and aim at generating data specific to the research interest. It should also gently lead participants into their engagement. As indicated in Figure 3.1, the first two topics do just that, namely, Topic 1: *What does it mean to you to live in Hout Bay?* and Topic 2: *Sensitisation of the terms environment and nature (and ecology)*. Where relevant, during the sessions I also requested specifics through probes, as in: "Could you give me an example of when you felt that way?"; "Could you tell me more about your experience of?"; "Has anyone else had similar experiences or feel similarly to?" I also prepared myself beforehand regarding possible lines of inquiry per each topic, if needed, during the session.

The structuring of the topic guide aimed to initially provide a personal, familiar context that immediately orientated participants' experiences in respect of the research interest. Topic 2 also aimed to sensitise the research to participants' interpretations of key concepts. This early part of the topic guide, and its application, is also cognisant of early social interaction dynamics. Topics 1 and 2 in the guide were presented to participants at the start of the sessions, in sequential order. In the focus group, Topic 1 was directed to each participant in order of their chosen seating around the table. Even though some interaction occurred, I would always return to directing Topic 1 to the next participant in sequence. Topic 2 was then similarly directed to the focus group participants. Having established the research interest and gently introduced participants to one another and the focus group context, Topics 3-6 (see Figure 3.1) were not presented in any order – allowing instead for group dynamics to play out more freely; at this time, I used the topic guide flexibly, following participant/s constructions, while also using the topic guide to maintain the research focus.

Figure 3.1: Topic guide



3.4.4 The sessions

A similar session format was employed in the focus group and individual interview sessions. All sessions were conducted in English. A large panoramic colour photograph of Hout Bay was placed, in clear view, on the table, around which participants sat. When participants arrived they were requested to complete an attendance sheet and to switch off their cell phones. Name tags were used in the focus group for easy identification. Participants were not paid to attend, nor reimbursed for travel. Refreshments and snacks were provided.

At the start of each session, I introduced myself and the research, typically repeating much of what had been said during recruitment. In both instances, this included stressing my interest in their views, emphasising ethical research issues, outlining the format and anticipated duration of the session and expressing my gratitude for their participation. I also noted that this research was part of my doctorate which was associated with the Open University, United Kingdom. I especially reassured participants with respect to confidentiality of their identity and indicated to them the importance of respecting other participants' confidentiality themselves. I then made a commitment that copies of the thesis when available would be made available at the local library and museum. Focus group participants were asked to use other participants' names wherever possible and to avoid speaking over one another. Participants were also assured that it was acceptable to have silences and moments of pause to consider their thoughts. Participants were then given an opportunity to ask questions for clarification. Consent to conduct the sessions was then requested and verbally given by participants. Permission to audio-tape the session was also requested having noted that the tapes would be transcribed by myself and possibly an additional professional transcriber who would similarly be subject to keeping their identities confidential. Once consent was given, taping commenced using a tape recorder which was placed in a pre-tested and discrete audio-optimised position. Additional tapes were readily on hand and were pre-labelled.

The focus group session lasted almost two and a half hours and the individual interview sessions from approximately half an hour to a little over an hour (see Appendix 4). Sessions tended to draw towards a natural closure, as engagement became repetitive and/or exhausted, though this did not preclude the possibility that new data might be forthcoming in subsequent engagements. At the end of the session, participants were thanked again for their participation and requested to complete a short, confidential baseline questionnaire (see Appendix 2 and 3). Audio-recording was ended, providing a formal closure. However, before and after the audio-recording I jotted down the occasional brief note – these proved most useful when I was transcribing the tapes and in my further analysis of the data, for example, by making notes of participants' seating order and their thoughts about the research. I tended not to make notes during sessions themselves, as I needed to be very attentive and engaged and note taking could be distracting to participants. Participants were also invited to ask questions either about the research or the questionnaire.

Notably, post session, before transcription, I combined my participant focus group seating notes with participant questionnaire data to construct a modified sociogram, for my own benefit. In this instance, a sociogram is a diagram illustrating the seating order of participants and any possible relations, resonance and/or disparities, as revealed by participants, between themselves (including myself). It also includes significant relations within the greater Hout Bay community and wider society, as expressed by participants, such as, membership in a community dance organization or a Church. These aided transcription and my further analysis. As they reveal confidential details, most especially with respect to community relations and at times shared networks between participants, no examples are provided.

3.4.5 Thematic analysis

Analysis began during the sessions themselves when, as moderator-interviewer, I actively attempted to appraise what was being communicated. Analysis is of course constrained

by the choice of language, in particular English, as a means of accessing meaning. It is also evident that meaning is not limited to verbal interaction but can also, for example, be conveyed through body language. However, my choice reflects my intention not to further complicate with different home languages an already complex research interest which involves participants from different cultures and backgrounds.

An immediate challenge was the choice of analytic method that could be applied to the focus group and the semi-structured, in-depth individual interview data. There are no universally-recognised procedures for analysing qualitative data (Spencer, Ritchie & O'Conner, 2003: 200). As this was a pilot study with exploratory aims, analysis was broad rather than detailed. The main learning focus for me was the experience of the data collection and analysis, plus attunement to particular sensitivities, such as the recognition of issues of importance, the nature of group interaction (including my own), and the tracking of emerging themes. I finally decided on the following analytical method or process:

1. Listening to the audio-recordings two or three times. Reviewing my post-session jotter notes while listening and making additional notes about interaction and possible themes.
2. Transcribing each audio-recording, see below.
3. Broadly identifying themes evident from the transcripts (and referring back to the original audio-recordings, as necessary). I initially attempted to employ Boyatzis' (1998) thematic analytical approach. However I later explored the thematic analytical approach advocated by Ritchie, Spencer and O' Conner (2003). I also made further notes about co-construction, including consensus, apparent honouring (Goffman, 1990) and disagreement, as well as expressions of social self rather than group, in the focus group.

Transcription

Transcription is of course a critical part of the analytical process. Poland (1995) infers that a partial or deteriorated version of the session experience emerges through transcription. Examples of deterioration according to Poland (1995: 299) are: the diminishment of context, empathy and emotional dynamics and the impoverishment of language. To reduce analytical distance from the audio-recordings, I employed a combination of what Krueger (1998) refers to as transcript-based analysis and tape-based analysis.

How one intends to analyse the recordings affects the manner in which one transcribes them, in particular the level of detail and linguistic attention. Conversation and discourse analysis studies provide detailed transcripts underscoring their view that talk is action (Silverman, 2000) and/or socially shared 'interpretative repertoires' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The transcription convention applied in the pilot study is informed by the research objectives and practical considerations. I aimed to reflect the content of the audio-recordings, as well as provide a sense of how people engaged and the tone of the sessions. I also used conventions employed by Mishler (1986a) and Poland (1995). I especially wanted the transcripts to achieve participants' particularity of expression. Hesitations, heightened engagement and pauses are noted in the transcription. However, my transcription is not as detailed as that required for conversation and discourse analysis. One practical reason for this is that the length of pauses cannot be regarded as anything more than a pause, which may or may not reflect the constraints of conversing in a second language. Additionally, people hesitate and pause, taking time to communicate knowledge and values that are deeply and /or tacitly known. Placing undue emphasis on hesitations and pauses, I felt, risked misleading interpretation.

The transcription convention is:

- Moderator/Interviewer: M or I
- Non lexical expressions: mm or mmhm
Extended expression = mmm

- Pauses: ...- where the number of dots reflects the duration of the pause as slowly counted; therefore two dots equates to a count of two
- Lengthy silence: ...- duration noted as slowly counted
- Laugh/Laughter: [Laugh]/ [Laughter]
- Group laugh [Group laugh]
- Unclear word/phrase: [unclear word]/ [unclear]
- Unclear group discussion: [Unclear group discussion]
- Group comments partially unclear: [Unclear group comments]
- Interruption: –
- Disturbance: [disturbance]
- Notes explaining specifics: [note] such as: [Male 1 and 2 talk over each other]
- Use of actual spoken words such as abbreviations. For example: err, um, 'cos, isn't.

In presenting select text from the transcripts, I regularly have to delete text which is not as critical to the point I am making. In so doing I note [deleted] to mark where text has been deleted.

Two approaches to thematic analysis

As mentioned, both Boyatzis' (1998) and Ritchie, Spencer and O'Conner's (2003) thematic analytical approaches were explored. Both approaches focus on content rather than interaction or performance. Even though the focus was on content, I also made analytical determinations in respect of the focus group data regarding interaction such as consensus.

Boyatzis' (1998) approach advocates inductively determining themes. These are then collated into codes which capture the 'richness of the phenomenon'. Codes are defined by five elements namely: a label; a definition of the theme; a description on how to identify

when a theme occurs; description of theme qualifications or exclusions; and examples (positive and negative) to assist in identifying themes (Boyatzis, 1998).

Similarly, Ritchie *et al.*'s (2003) approach directs the initial identification of themes. These themes are then used to construct an indexed thematic framework by linking, then grouping them into wider main themes and sub-themes. The data are then labelled using index references. A 'passage of data' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 226) may involve more than one index reference. A review of the labelling aims to refine the indexing both in application and in terms of the initially determined main and sub-themes. The data are then sorted and synthesised through thematic charting. For each main theme, a thematic chart is constructed. This process summarises key data, while retaining its contextual link to the wider transcript. This includes identifying key aspects of what is specifically communicated and then categorising these into broader coherent, conceptual categories.

Emergent themes

To varying extents in the focus group and the individual, semi-structured interviews, the following themes were broadly noted:–

- Environment as risky
- Moral, value-laden environmental dwelling
- Knowledgeable and skilful ecological dwelling
- Environment and time
- Ecological empowerment – the extent to which the group perceived themselves as able to, and having the resources and social power to, effect their choices or desires, in respect of their everyday dwelling relations.

These themes gave a sense of what people interpreted environment as, their constructions thereof, as well as their constructions of their social self or social group ecological identity. However, the bigger lesson, as discussed below, was the experience

of the session engagements, the data method and analysis and the early indications of what was important to Hout Bay residents in respect of environment and identity.

3.4.6 Review of pilot study

Key insights I gained from the pilot study were:

- During recruitment participants tended to be non-committal, often providing no venue, date or specific time options for the sessions. This is possibly because they couldn't think of such details, especially venue options for the session at the time we spoke – or even in the follow-up communication – and/or because of a tendency to locate such choices as part of the research agenda and as such not something that they feel they would actually determine.
- Environment is a deeply emotional experience and interpretation. It is fundamental to how groups and social selves construct their ecological identities.
- Both the group and individual participants struggled to synthesise their *definitions of environment and/or nature* (Topic 2). Succinct, clear definitions were illusive. This suggests a deep, taken-for-granted, tacit knowing of environment. It also suggests complex interpretations and even contradictions in how they perceive themselves to be of the environment and/or nature.
- Group participants tended to present social self perspectives regarding Topic 4: *Spirituality and environment*. This appeared not to be about conflicting or other social self positions; rather such views appeared to be deeply personal and not something reflecting social group relations.
- At times, there was evidence that participants in individual interviews were resourcing stories in wider circulation. An example was the older Harbour female participant, whose constructions regularly resourced stories of her community, the Harbour community.
- The focus group engagement, supported by the application of the topic guide, spanned a range of relevant topics, generated data consistent with the research focus, and was dynamic, rich and often spontaneous. At times, perspectives were

presented that I had not anticipated. However, I did find that compared to the individual in-depth interviews, it was more difficult to have the group follow through on all topics raised. However, I also found that there were variations between participants' responses in the individual interviews regarding the comparative time spent exploring the different topics – an indication no doubt of varying importance in their identity constructions.

- During the focus group session, an older male participant (Male 3 – see Appendix 3), who had been associated with Hout Bay for many years and who was especially conscious of his ecological relations, was particularly dominant in the group; he also behaved very authoritatively towards me. Despite my verbal techniques, such as redirection to another participant and supporting body language, I found this participant especially challenging in terms of moderation.
- As interviewer/moderator, I attempted to be especially attuned to sensitivities and contexts. Nevertheless, during the Valley focus group session I encountered a blatant, racially underpinned construction, which aimed to demarcate this community from others. This was challenging to my own personal views (which I did not verbally express), but it was an important reminder to be critically aware of such challenges and to flag them rather than deny their existence or claim objectiveness.
- I critically reviewed the audio-recordings and the transcripts regarding the nature and extent of my intentional and unintentional co-constructive contributions. I found that my assumed community membership, age and academic association did influence how participants responded. I also found that occasionally it was very easy to slip too far into participants' stories as opposed to maintaining a critical distance. The lessons learnt I hoped would improve my moderator skills. I felt it is important to balance critical awareness of moderator co-construction while also remaining true to the research and ethical considerations.
- Several participants felt intimidated by the contextualisation of the study as university research. My intention in mentioning this link had been to reassure and

legitimise the study. However, it became clear early on in the sessions in respect of Topic 2 (Figure 3.1) that there was a sense of unease in presenting their definitions in an academic context. This was despite my efforts to stress that there were no right or wrong answers and reiteration of the research interest in their views. A confident and educated professional man, for example, said:

"I'd like to know what your [moderator] definition of ecology is? Or what is the academic, ah .. definition of ecology – [Deleted] Cause, that is important to me to be able to give real comment on the ecology and the environment "(Male 1, Appendix 3).

- Trust is an essential part of achieving successful interview-focus group sessions. In my opinion, there was a fair, albeit varied, degree of social trust between myself and the pilot study participants. This gradually improved during the course of the sessions. However there were moments of caution. For example, in the focus group, there was a suggestion that I had an 'agenda'; and one participant described the aerial photograph as:

"put here as a deliberate little tool" (Male 3, Appendix 3).

- A key advantage of the focus group over the individual interview, in my experience of the pilot study, was social generation of data in which several and at times different positions could be presented, contested and legitimated.
- Even though the recordings, and more so the transcript, are removed from the initial experience and are partial versions of the sessions, emotion, emphasis, pauses, ambiguity, consensus and discord could be at least be revisited and assessed through them post-session. This is not to imply that the audio- recordings were easy to transcribe and interpret. A typical example was intense focus group engagement, where participants tended to forget to use their and others names and spoke over one another. At key points, this made constructions difficult to follow and impeded transcription. The use of one tape recorder also proved restrictive in terms of clarity of sound and continuity of data recording.
- The baseline questionnaire (Appendix 2) worked well, with the exception of my

instructions regarding sketching participants' key relationships within Hout Bay and, where applicable, between present focus group members. These were perceived as ambiguous and unclear.

- The topic guide (Figure 3.1) was largely successful. I did however realise that I needed to hone my skilful use of the document. In particular, this involved using the listed topics to spark off focused discussion, then keeping track of topics that were intertwined in the discussion and at times also revisited.
- In my opinion and experience, neither of the two analytical approaches explored trumped the other. I felt uncomfortable applying Boyatzis' (1998) approach because, in my opinion, it tended to abruptly decontextualise the analysis from the data, especially the constructive process, and it constrained multiple indexing of constructions. Nevertheless, in the end I also did not feel comfortable with the subtle realism framed, analytical approach advocated by Ritchie *et al.* (2003) because it also ultimately fragmented the data and was constrained with respect to respecting the constructive, complex narrative character of the stories people told about their ecological identities.

The pilot study was an invaluable experience offering critical insights into all its objectives. As will be discussed in Section 3.5, these informed the final data collection and analytical method employed in the main study.

3.5 The main study

3.5.1 Introduction

The main study, comprising six focus groups, was conducted in Hout Bay, between 2004 and 2005. There were two focus groups per each of the three communities. A total of 36 people participated, of whom 20 were females and 16 males. Baseline demographic information, sourced from the baseline questionnaire (Appendix 2) about these participants, can be found in Chapters 4-6, Sections 4.2.2, 5.2.2 and 6.2.2, as well as Appendix 5. This information is presented in a way that preserves the confidentiality of the

participants. Five other people from Imizamo Yethu attempted to participate in a further four focus group sessions. As discussed in detail in Chapter 6, these sessions could not be held because of recruitment criteria and attendance issues. Appendix 6 provides a tabulated record of all sessions with information such as dates, venues, duration of sessions and duration of audio recordings.

When I returned to Hout Bay in late 2003, to set up and conduct the main study, community tensions were particularly evident. Herman's (2006) descriptive news article and Joubert's (2007) news report article detail the legacy of contentious issues, spanning the study period, including unchecked and significant influx of newcomers and informal settlement, as well as poor quality of life conditions experienced by those in Imizamo Yethu (Appendix 7). These were perceived to be a consequence of over-crowding and the lack of adequate provision of basic services such as water, sanitation, education and health care (Herman, 2006). Additionally, crime noticeably increased in 2000, with a dramatic escalation in 2003 (Hout Bay Neighbourhood Watch, 2011). Over the years, community tensions have flared up and settled, although the issues of concern have never been resolved. Additionally, in February 2004 an especially large fire destroyed numerous homes, mainly in Imizamo Yethu, leaving many destitute (Appendix 1). As noted in Chapter 2, crises can offer a research opportunity in that they tend to expose deeply held or taken-for-granted meanings.

3.5.2 Data collection method: focus groups

Drawing on the research frame and questions and the literature, as well as the experience of the pilot study, I chose to use focus groups as the single method of investigation. The following discussion only highlights key differences from the pilot study and additional information as necessary to understand the main study method.

Recruitment

In terms of the Valley community, I approached local business networks such as estate agents, of which there are numerous in Hout Bay, ranging from those connected to large corporate property companies to small, owner businesses. Several estate agents have been established in Hout Bay for many years, some more than 20 years, and those involved tend to also live in Hout Bay. They typically cultivate local networks for their own professional use. I was also able to benefit from estate agents own private networks – one example is the local horse-riding community – which provided another rich sampling resource. This is a popular and well established community, often linked to those living on numerous small plots, in the Hout Bay Valley, which stable horses and/or offer riding classes. Additionally, the local horse-riding centre attracts a diversity of families with their own networks. I also approached those in marine commercial and recreational networks as well as local tourism and Cape film industry networks. A particular advantage of these networks was the number and diversity of networks throughout the Valley community, private and professional, which radiated out from them.

Initially, there were significant access issues in respect of resourcing participants for the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu community focus groups because of community conflict issues and in the case of Imizamo Yethu, the sense that environment was closely linked to their land tenure security – something which deeply concerned them (Chapter 1). Because of land tenure sensitivities, there were political gatekeepers who tended to largely control access to the Imizamo Yethu community. In April and May 2005, I approached a representative of the community advocacy group, Imagine Hout Bay (Chapter 1), with the intention of calling on their experience of engaging Hout Bay communities. A key issue that emerged from this discussion was that of enlisting volunteer community members to assist in recruitment. Trust was a particular challenge, as was finding community members who were educated and conversant in English and could spare the time and loss of any income and/or reduced household livelihood participation, to assist with recruitment. Bloor and Wood (2006) do note that key

informants can be considered invaluable in that they grant access to communities of interest. In this respect, I finally made contact with two key informants, namely, Ella and Carl. Ella, a respected older Harbour female participant who had participated in the pilot study was able to assist me in gaining access to the Harbour community. Having had experience of the individual interview approximately two years previously she had some understanding about the research process and displayed a good degree of trust with respect to the research claims. For the IY community, I used referrals initially from the Jikeleza community dance network to gain access. I was finally able to work with Carl, an Imizamo Yethu community member who was well respected in the Christian religious community. Carl had links to the local Xhosa, Transkei residential networks and a local religious network. Once I had the support of these key community members recruitment went relatively smoothly – as did session attendance.

Recruiting Harbour and Imizamo Yethu participants was approached in three steps. Firstly, I met with Ella and Carl (separately) and we discussed what I would like to say to potential participants, as well as explaining what the study was about and what participation involved. I also spoke in-depth about the recruitment criteria and how to apply them. It was important that Ella and Carl were consistent in their presentation of the study and in their recruitment, as well as being sensitive to their community contexts. To this end, we drafted a clear, brief, bullet list of information about the research interest, selection criteria and what the sessions involved. We also role-played how they would present the study and recruit participants. Secondly, Ella and Carl approached community members. Thirdly, once potential participants had indicated a serious interest, I then followed up to finalise recruitment.

Ella and Carl participated in their community's first focus group session and were present at the second. Rather than ignore their potential influence, I felt that it was more beneficial to review any influence they may have had by comparing both sessions with respect to their active participation versus their presence. Given the sensitivity and volatility of the

context, their presence helped ensure attendance of participants and develop a measure of trust with participants, who most likely would not otherwise have opened up in the sessions let alone attend; their presence helped ensure very active participation and the generation of rich data. While they did not actively participate in the second session, they were present, though not always in the room, as they co-ordinated attendance, transport and provided a sense of reassurance to their fellow community members. In this context, I feel that the use of key informants was justifiable. Nevertheless, one cannot rule out potential influence from these key informants. Moreover, as Payne and Payne (2004) caution, key informants have their own views which may be misleading. A critical awareness of this is adopted in this study, as will be apparent in the data analysis.

Venues and remuneration

My pilot study approach to venue choices was refined in the light of advice from Ella and Carl and my own further investigation of well-frequented local public places. I needed local, safe, familiar, easily accessible, available and affordable venues with basic facilities. It was important too to be socially sensitive to the different communities' interpretations of the venues. I also wanted to maintain the pilot study arrangement of seating participants around a table, to create a sense of togetherness and enhance the flow of interaction (and assist with transcription and moderation), in contrast to row on row or scattered seating. Venues considered included local churches, community centres and meeting rooms and also the local museum. In the end, St Peters Church, Hout Bay library, Hout Bay community centre, and my home meeting room were used as venues. Appendix 6 provides details of sessions and venues.

Unlike the pilot study, Harbour and Imizamo Yethu focus groups participants were remunerated for taxi fares from their homes in Hout Bay to the session venues in Hout Bay.

Topic guide and baseline questionnaire

I refined my use of the topic guide by using it to concentrate on eliciting stories about the ways in which communities perceived themselves in respect of the environment. The instructions regarding the sketching of possible and/notable relationships in the baseline questionnaire were refined in response to confusion expressed by participants in the pilot study (Appendix 2).

Audio-recording and transcription

- Two tape recorders, one digital the other tape, were placed at opposite ends of the room, but in close proximity to participants. Two recorders proved most useful during tape changes and also for capturing dynamic or very quiet conversations.

Transcription convention remained consistent but included line numbering and involved rigorous attention to each spoken word and sentence, as well as to interaction. Repeated reviews of sections of the audio-recordings were necessary, especially during unclear moments, often when focus group engagement was intense and when there were sensitive and highly emotional expressions. Transcription was a demanding and time consuming process, but it was a task I felt important to conduct myself. In assisting in the transcription of unclear discourse I used a third party (committed to confidentiality), located outside of the Western Cape, to review a selection of materials.

3.5.3 Analysis

Introduction

This section will attempt to provide a clear account of the interpreted narrative analytical approach and the process employed. The thematic content narrative analytical approach adopted in the main study differs considerably from the pilot study approaches. It responds to the insight gained that people, individuals and groups alike, are consummate story tellers when communicating their interpretation of environment, their ecological experiences, their ecological identity – even strategically fashioning their own ecological

identities (and sometimes those of others) through stories. The analysis also offered a way to fully respect the stories told by the communities, the meaning making process, the search for coherency, in a manner not possible for example with the thematic analytical fragmentation of data (Mishler, 1999). Narrative caters for the way people experience themselves in respect of time, how they reinterpret themselves in view of the past, present and imagined future (Riessman, 1993, 2008). Russian formalist and literary theorist Bakhtin (1981) argues that stories are dialogically constructed with words rich in past meaning and involving many voices – that of history, politics, and meanings beyond the intentions of the speaker or author. As Gubrium and Holstein declare,

“If stories are about our lives...[then] they are also part of society” (2009: xv).

This illustrates the complexity and extent to which stories as constructions can reflect wider stories in society.

The trend in narrative research has been to explore personal narratives about experiences and identity construction (Riessman, 1993, 2008; Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). This study not only explores community narratives it, unusually, uses focus groups to do so. Narrative research typically provides no clear starting and ending points. There are numerous approaches and versions of narrative analysis and detailed accounts of narrative analytical processes are rare (Squire *et al.*, 2008). Gubrium and Holstein (2009) even question whether stories have borders, or whether they are so fluid as to challenge identification.

What complicates the value of narrative for research purposes is that a clear, commonly accepted definition of the term in the literature is illusive (Riessman, 1993; Squire *et al.*, 2008). Like Riessman (1993), in this study, narrative is considered broadly synonymous with stories, but goes beyond that to be a socially constructed discourse, a sense-making tool, linking events over time in a strategic manner for the purposes of the narrator as well as an audience (whether physically present or not). Narratives, in this context, are

considered the social constructions of communities, in language, about themselves. This may take the form of classically structured stories about past experiences or events.

Language

Narrative preferences language as a means of accessing people's interpretations (Polkinghorne, 1988; Bruner, 2002; Squire *et al.*, 2008). Polkinghorne (1998) contends that,

“Our encounter with reality produces a meaningful and understandable flow of experience” (1998: 13),

expressed through language, such as accounts or stories. Moreover, language is considered a,

“product and the possession of a community” (Polkinghorne, 1988: 23).

Such stories, Dauite and Lightfoot (2004) note, are embedded with cultural values and morals.

The dilemma of preferencing language is whether to view it as a transparent communication of the experience of reality or as a distorting screen of that experience (Polkinghorne, 1988: 26). Highlighting considerations of validity, Riessman (1993) claims that accounts of experience, presented through language, are not accounts of the truth of reality ‘out there’; rather they are about narrative truth as,

“constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive” (Riessman, 1993: 5).

Stories and their analysis are therefore always distanced and partial interpretations of experience (Riessman, 1993). This is an unavoidable constraint to this study.

While the study recognises the co-constructive role of participants and myself, it is also important to remember that co-construction continues through to analysis, where there is

a second review of meaning by the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In this study, this second review is guided by narrative thematic content analysis and the research interest. Typically of studies interested in thematic narrative content, in this study's analysis there is sole dependency on the detailed text of the focus group transcripts. Despite my efforts to retain a sense of the dynamic with the audio-recordings, they are a removed experience from the original events and are iterative in interpretation (Riessman, 1993). As Ricoeur (1990) posits, one is distanced from spoken discourse by text by what he calls *distanciation*. This begins when meaning is fixed into text (Ricoeur, 1990). He cautions that in text, meaning is vulnerable to over interpretation and/or meaning that was not intended and gives the illusion that meaning is static. Text becomes independent of the original co-constructive process, freed of its original social context, and open to repeated interpretations by the reader/s (Ricoeur, 1990). This is a reminder of the need for caution in my analysis – a sentiment that readers will no doubt also need to bear in mind.

Holliday (2002), drawing on the work of Schutz (1964), further stresses that a researcher needs to make 'the familiar strange'. That emphasises the need to be vigilant, viewing everything from the standpoint of a stranger, constantly seeking to identify and question assumptions. This is especially relevant, given my close familiarity with the South African context - and especially that of Hout Bay.

Thematic content narrative analysis

This study focuses on thematic content primarily of narratives (or stories) and also of additional constructions. In an effort to move beyond the constraints of a purely thematic content based analysis, where context and performance are not acknowledged, I explore these aspects with the intention of enhancing the content focused analysis. For example, I give an indication of the extent to which a story can be considered a group story and the context in which it arose. As Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber helpfully declare,

"Form is not always easily separated from the content of the story" (1998:14).

An adaptation of Labov (1972) and Labov and Waletzky's (1997) analytical approach to stories is employed. Central to this more sociolinguistic approach, is the view that a narrative is a sequence of temporally ordered clauses about what happened, followed by what happened next, and then and then, structured by a plot and supported by an evaluation; where the evaluation is regarded as,

"the soul of the narrative" (Riessman, 1993: 21).

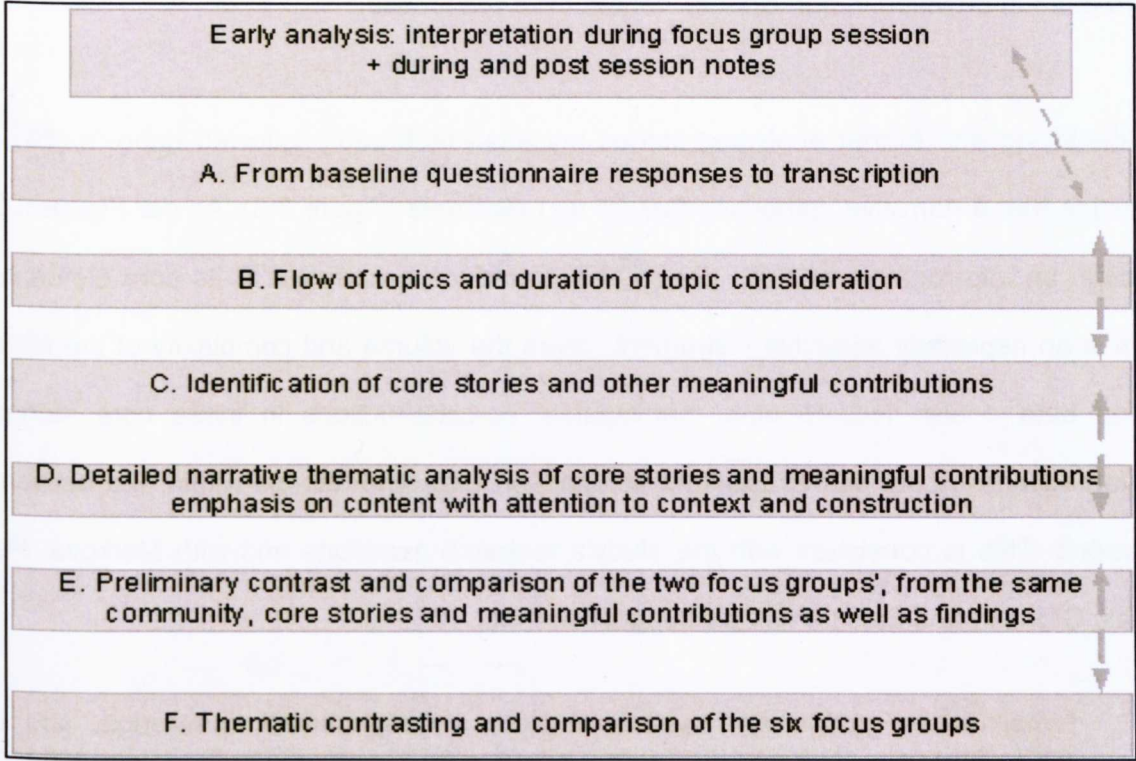
In my own study, as will be discussed, what constitutes a narrative is more loosely interpreted, with structured and less structured stories and accounts having been considered.

The overall analytical process involves seven key parts as identified in Figure 3.2. As the arrows illustrate, this process moved forwards yet also revisits various steps. Part A of the analysis involves compiling and critically reviewing participant baseline questionnaire responses; compiling sociograms (see Section 3.4.4); listening to session audio-recordings two to three times and making notes in respect of any possible insights the baseline data and sociograms could add to what was been said; and transcribing the audio-recordings in detail. Transcription followed the same conventions as noted for the pilot study (Section 3.4.5). However, when presenting edited stories and additional excerpts from the transcripts in the reporting chapters (Chapters 4-6) of this thesis, a few additional conventions are employed. These are:

- The use of line numbers which link the edited stories and excerpts back to the full transcript;
- When text in a line is broken up by the analysis into different analytical sections the line number is repeated and space left where the other part of the text would be (either at the end or at the beginning of the line). For an example, see Figure 3.5, Line 013 (Abstract/Orientation);
- Where text has been deleted it is marked as [Deleted].

A critical reporting of participants' baseline questionnaire responses, per focus group, is presented Chapters 4-6. Additionally, selective participant baseline questionnaire data are presented in graphs in Appendix 5. In Part B (Figure 3.2), transcripts were reviewed and the flow of topics throughout each session identified and critically considered. This includes the duration of the engagement on topics from the Topic sheet and their flow. A summary of each focus group's session flow of topics is presented in Chapters 4-6.

Figure 3.2: Outline of analytical process



Following the identification of core stories and other meaningful contributions (Part C), this summary was enhanced by contextualisation of where core stories and other contributions had occurred in the flow of topics.

Part C is therefore the key step of the analysis. It primarily concerns locating group stories amidst the extensive volume of rich focus group data. There are two parts to this process. The first concerns identifying individual participants' core stories and contributions throughout the transcript, making notes of any other participants' co-constructive

contributions. The second part concerns identifying group stories and other insightful constructions. In both parts, when locating stories within the transcripts, I employ an adapted version of Labov's (1972) narrative analysis. I did not constrain the analysis to events nor to the self, as does Labov's (1972) method, although this did provide an early marker of possible stories. The central research question of how groups construct their ecological identity, plus the supporting research questions detailed in Chapter 2, provided direction as to what was significant to this study, while the topics from the topic sheet also analytically divided up the transcript – although this proved complex at times as topics were often intertwined in participants' constructive responses.

In identifying and further analysing stories my analysis broadly followed Labov's (1972) direction that a narrative comprises five (or six) elements (Figure 3.3). As per Figure 3.3, through an interrogative process one is able to reduce a narrative to its core elements. This is an especially attractive instrument, given the volume and complexity of the focus group data. I also include other participants' co-constructions in these core stories. Advantageously, core stories facilitate comparison with other stories within and between sessions. This is consistent with the study's research questions and with Marková, Per Linell, Grossen and Salazar Orvig's suggestion that,

“when focus groups are used to explore socially shared knowledge, and in particular social representations, one would want to summarise the major patterns exhibited ...and also to generalise across focus groups in terms of their similarities and differences” (2007: 159).

Figure 3.3: Elements of a core story

Core story elements (in sequential order)	
Abstract (A) :	Summary of the story's focus (what is it about?)
Orientation (O) :	With respect to time, place, characters and/or situation
Complicating Action (C):	The story's peripeteia or turning point or sequence of events
Evaluation (E):	Appraisal of what happened and/or meaning of the story
Resolution/Coda (R/C):	Conclusion of the story and return to the present
(as per Labov's (1972) core story model)	

In practice, I did not expect or require a story to contain all of the core elements. In some cases the abstract was missing; often however the research context, plus my use of the topic guide and/or reference to a previous story helped provide this component, at the very least in outline. In turn, the 'skeleton plot' (Mishler, 1986b: 237) or complicating action details what happens in the story. The complicating action can be an expression of a turning point, often unexpected, a peripeteia,

"a sudden reversal in circumstances" (Bruner, 2002: 5).

Evaluation, Labov (1972) asserts, infuses the entire story. It is critical to understanding the meaning of the story, why it is strategically told. In respect of the evaluation (but also throughout the core narratives) I pay analytical attention to a selection of Labov's (1972) types of evaluative expressions, such as asides and instruments, for example when people expressed vocal and emotional expressions for example shouting, repetition or humour (intensifiers). I also pay attention to the references made to self (I, me, my, mine) and social community group (us, we, our) (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). The interpretation of these aspects is sometimes complex as meaning can be ambivalent and/or ambiguous unless supported by narrative explanation. Attention to these references is not overtly applied and further context is often sought, because of language issues and co-construction dynamics. The aim is to direct my attention to particularly meaningful parts of the evaluation and what could possibly be a key group narrative.

In the case of both parts of Part C of this analysis, core stories are further cleaned and reviewed so that a balance is achieved between presenting construction and core content and lengthy, wordy excerpts. Returning to the first part of Part C, all participants' stories and contributions are then saved in Microsoft Word files, one for each participant, within a unique group folder. Print outs of this information allow me to review (side by side) what each participant constructed in sequence and also to acquire a sense of group co-construction including group dynamics, by virtue of the process of reviewing notes on such contributions and on other participants stories. In identifying stories, the ultimate

objective is to locate group stories rather than individual, social self stories. When faced with a volume of rich data, spanning a two or so hour session period it is difficult to initially determine what is a group and what is a social self narrative. As noted, stories do not always present themselves with clear beginnings and endings and sometimes they emerge through complex presentations of self and negotiated meaning (Goffman, 1990). In the second part of Part C, having familiarised myself with the data and the stories being told, I then ask: *What is the group communicating about who they are in respect of the environment?* For each focus group, all participants' stories and other contributions are reviewed in a logical order according to when they occurred in the session, but also with critical reviews of the data between all parts of the session. Determining what constitutes a group narrative is central to the analysis. The contexts in which constructions arise are analytically reviewed; this facilitates insights into the activity of group construction and meaning and helps follow stories that may span an entire session, or which may be revisited and further constructed. I also consider the evidence of verbal and non-verbal participant/s and moderator co-construction and ask what does this say about the extent to which a story is a *group* story; I also appraise the extent to which a narrative driven by one or two participants constitutes a *group* narrative (In Chapters 4-6, these issues are discussed at an appropriate level of detail). Stories are then pared down to core constructions and together with other constructive contributions', these are critically reviewed and reduced in number, guided by this study's research interest. Individual stories and contributions (first part of Part C) are then compared and contrasted with the select group stories and contributions (second part of Part C) and any insights noted. Mishler (1999: 15, 84-85), citing Hobbs (1979), makes the case for the analysis and reporting presentation of longer narrative excerpts, to illustrate coherence (or lack thereof) as opposed to 'single clauses'. This is especially important in respect of this study where a) several participants as groups are co-constructing stories, b) meaning of environment are tacit and c) the construction of ecological identity is likely to be complicated (as suggested by some of the literature in Chapter 2).

Figure 3.4: Example of identified flow of individual participant core stories (Matt, Harbour Focus Group One – HFG1)

Matt (HFG1): Second speaker; follows John	
STORY 1: "WASN'T ACTUALLY BORN IN HOUT BAY"/PLACE WHERE ONE HAS =====	
A RIGHT TO BELONG? =====	
Abstract Topic 1: What does it mean to you to live in Hout Bay?	
Orientation 032 M (Moderator): And you Matt?	
[Matt's story/ connection or link to expectations of engagement – Goffman (1990) as per wider community narrative and expressions by other participants - Harbour narrative of belonging to Hout Bay]	
Complicating Action 033 Matt: No, um,um, I'm not actually, 034 I wasn't actually born in Hout Bay	
Evaluation 035 but ah...you know when I was very young 036 my mother lived here in Hout Bay. 037 She lived on the other side here [pointing behind venue indicating valley near beach homes] 039 and then when we came to stay here.. 040 and then I started to grow up in Hout Bay 041 that that was about when I being about seven or eight years old. 042 That's when ah I got here.	
Resolution and Coda 043 Since that time I've been living in Hout Bay 044 all the time 045 M: You never moved out and then came back? 046 You've always stayed here? 047 Matt: No, sin since that time I, 048 I've been around here 049 all the time	
Matt (HFG1): Matt follows John	
STORY3: "SINCE I'VE BEEN ON LAND" =====	
Abstract Topic 3: Environmental values	
Orientation 756 Matt: You know I, you know I, I was ah... before I was here on land, I was a skipper and I always think of the sunset, when I go to sea, some nights - 757 Ella: mmm	
Complicating Action 758 Matt: but now I have to go drive to the the ah the beach and sit in my bakkie [truck] and watch the sunset 759 [group laughs] 760 M (Moderator): I thought you were going to say, you pay a toll now! [reference to recently introduced Chapmans peak/ beach toll road] [group including Matt laughs] 761 Matt: then it was Chapmans Peak, you know?	
Evaluation 762 But especially er enjoy the environment emotionally 763 when you're depressed - 764 M: mm? 765 Matt: You know, when you feel that there's something tight in here 766 and you take a walk then, 767 then you really enjoy life, then, I think. 768 I, I don't think you just enjoy it because you want to, 769 you enjoy it because there certain things that you want to, feel 770 and that you should enjoy of it, you know? 771 M: Yes 772 Matt: You know? ... 773 M: You seem very - 774 Matt: Because I, because sometimes when I feel now, 775 like that I just go to the beach 776 and I sit there or I, you know? 777 M: mmmhm 778 Matt: or watch the sunset and things like that, that's it. 779 It's really good for me that 780 For then. And then in er everyday it's just kinda of ok 781 and at other times you need, that space or that experience just to -	
Resolution/Coda 783 that's right, ja..and in the mornings early, 784 ah...I used to stand up very early in the ah I see the, the day break 785 and things like that, then I - 786 M: mm 786 M: since I've been on land. 786 Matt: But I used to see it every time when I'm at sea.	

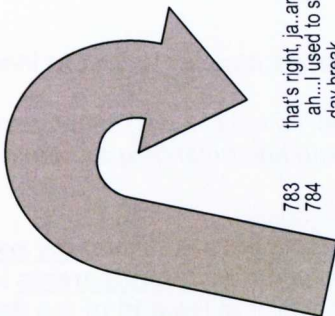


Figure 3.5: Example of individual participant core story analysis

(Abe, Harbour Focus Group Two – HFG2)

Abe (Harbour Focus Group 2 – HFG2): Second speaker; follows Carla

STORY 1: “WASN’T ACTUALLY BORN IN HOUT BAY”/PLACE WHERE ONE HAS A RIGHT TO BELONG?

Hout Bay/ Family/ Community roots

[Notes: underline and bold = analytical notation]

Abstract

Topic 1: What does it mean to you to live in Hout Bay

[Notes: Storyline resonates with other participants’ stories...resourcing personal and community narratives of being and belonging as oldest Hout Bay community]

Orientation

013 Abe: Well, for me it’s sort mm, my roots. It’s where the family started, dating back to my
 014 father or when my grandparents landed here. It sort of dates back to history, family
 015 history, which at the end of the day is something so valuable to you as a person. You
 016 sort of still want to maintain that and still want to be part of that.

[Notes: reflexive; critical awareness of self and social community]

Complicating Action

016 Today, we sort of um,
 017 we look back and we sort of see ourselves, sort of... My father’s generation, the
 018 generation sort of being extinguished or they’re no longer there and we’re the next
 019 generation and you’re looking on.

[Notes: Past, present and future ...making sense of the present; view of being extinguished – strong; vulnerability – social self/ family/ community; positive-negative-ambivalent/undefined interpretation]

Evaluation

019 The new generation is actually also starting with the
 020 brothers’ and sisters’ children. Ja, like I say, it sort of just dates back to history,
 021 family,
 021 values.

[Notes: could mean family and/or community members as locally they refer to themselves as broadly ‘brothers’/‘sisters’; links to ‘generation’; also brings in Topic 6: Children (self-family-community) and environment; and Topic 3: Environmental values; again past-present-future brought into sense making of present]

Resolution and Coda

022 M (Moderator): You feel it’s your roots, living here?

023 Abe: Your roots

Biographical narrative – link self/ social community to environment – particularly Hout Bay Harbour as place-community. Personal/ emotional. Abe moves from this narrative to one about his life choices as a young man – considers leaving Hout Bay (against community narrative) desires new beginning/ new opportunities. Later links to ‘manipulation and monopolisation’ narrative. Interplay between M and Abe Lines 022/023 but echoes Abe in Line -013

The latter parts of the analytical process, Parts D, E and F (Figure 3.2), concern the identification of emergent themes and contrasting and comparing these themes between each pair of same community focus groups and finally across all six focus groups, across all communities – this is the subject of the chapters that follow. Once themes are finalised (noting the iterative nature of the analytical process) the final themes are discussed in detail with reference to the research questions and literature (Chapter 7).

3.6 Ethics, validity and reliability

3.6.1 Ethics

Social researchers have responsibilities to fulfil in terms of their research, especially in respect of those they involve and whose lives they may impact (Israel & Hay, 2006). Liamputtong (2010) underscores the importance of respect for those linked to the research, the maintenance of dignity and suggests research should be reciprocal. In this respect I have been guided by The Open University's ethical practice (Open University, 2011). Ethical considerations include my role as researcher and a Hout Bay community member, the extent to which I can interpret other communities' constructions of themselves, the possible influence of key informants and also my commitments to protect participants' identities. At the same time, it was important to ensure that even though this study had academic research objectives, the thesis would in some way be accessible to the communities of Hout Bay. Two small examples of this concern are a) the use of pseudonyms rather than male 1 or female 1 in the main study transcripts and analysis reporting, and b) the expressed intention to give two copies of the thesis, one each to the Hout Bay library and Hout Bay community museum.

The pilot study, including the unsuccessful efforts to conduct the early Imizamo Yethu focus groups, enabled me to become increasingly attuned to ethical considerations and to respond appropriately. In view of the sensitivity of the Hout Bay context and the perceived links of the research to land tenure, participants did not sign consent forms. Rather, they

gave their consent/permission verbally during recruitment and again when requested at the start of the session (see also Sections 3.4.4 and 3.5.2). As Liamputtong (2010) notes, written consent can be intimidating to vulnerable groups such as particular cultural and ethnic groups. For similar reasons, the session attendance sheet, baseline questionnaire and name tags required participants to note only their first name.

3.6.2 Validity

Validity refers to truth – it is a measure of how far research approximates the truth of the social phenomena to which it refers (Hammersley, 1990: 57). This study preferences narrative truth and seeks to demonstrate trustworthiness (Riessman, 1993, 2008). From this perspective, stories cannot be validated with respect to past research traditions because they are subjective, constructed and reconstructed, contextual and are meaning-making instruments. Moreover, the interest is not on whether a story can be validated with evidence, but what the story strategically conveys. The premise of the focus group sessions, with multiple participants, was to facilitate the revelation of trustworthiness through social interaction.

One validation technique is to give participants a copy of their session transcript and/or the tentative research findings and then to consider their critique of it (Silverman, 2001: 235-236). This is problematic to this study given its ontological and epistemological positions. Further, Mason (2002: 192-194) questions this technique's epistemological assumption, given that it privileges participants' knowledge. Participants' may also not see themselves within the research language of the study's findings. From an ethical standpoint, all participants were advised that they could request copies of their session transcripts – only three main study participants requested a copy. They similarly commented that their reading of the transcript, in its entirety or in part, made them more aware of how they and others thought about the environment – no challenges were presented nor changes requested.

A more detailed appraisal of validity in respect of this research experience is discussed in Chapter 8.

3.6.3 Reliability

Traditionally, a reliable result is not necessarily considered to be a valid result. However, Riessman (2008) notes that in qualitative narrative research, the boundaries between the two are very blurred. This study, with its qualitative, interpretivist and constructionist orientation, focuses on gaining deep insights into communities' ecological understandings of themselves (and others). As is typical of such studies, small strategically, non-random, directed samples are used. This means that statistical representation of the findings to the wider population is not possible. However, as noted in this chapter in relation to sampling: Section 3.4.1, the intention is to seek resonance with the wider population. In this respect, a qualitative researcher, Creswell (2003: 196) notes should look to the literature, including his earlier work with Miller, which advises the pursuit of 'trustworthiness', 'authenticity' and 'credibility'.

Given that there is only one researcher in this study it is impossible to fulfil Silverman's (2001: 227) 'different observers' check. However, by making the decision audit trail transparent and by requesting external colleagues to review the analysis, one can attain a measure of the 'degree of consistency' (Silverman, 2000: 175). An example is the determination of themes and assignment of data to respective themes. In a form of peer review or debriefing (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:122; Creswell, 2003: 196), my external supervisor, Joan Solomon and I reviewed the approach to the research, methods, transcripts and much of the analysis. Sessions with Joan and other doctoral candidates facilitated further discussion and insights into this research. Jeff Thomas, my internal supervisor, also provided critical reviews of the latter part of my analysis. My other internal supervisor, Kevin Collins, provided critical reviews of the final analysis, most especially in respect of themes, as did a South African colleague involved in the public sector and qualified in development, finance and economics. Again, the experience of the pilot study,

as well as the resonant and contrasting experiences of the different focus groups in the main study, imparted a greater awareness of issues with respect to reliability. Supportive reasoning throughout one's research, as advocated by Mason (1996), Silverman (2000) and Holliday (2002), also went towards satisfying the demand for reliability.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter described and explained the interpretivist, constructionist frame and basic qualitative interpretive approach to investigating ecological identities of Hout Bay communities'. As was evident from the pilot study onwards, individuals and groups have strong emotions about their ecological embeddedness and who they are in this respect.

Numerous methodological challenges were encountered, most especially, in respect of the sensitivities in the Hout Bay context concerning communities and the environment, data collection methods, analytical approaches and ethics. These were critically considered when determining the approach to the main study and are continually considered throughout the study.

Hout Bay as a case study is the essence of the method finally employed. Following experimentation in the pilot with focus groups and in-depth interviews, focus groups that were homogeneous in terms of community membership are the main data collection method. Focus group data are analysed using an interpreted version of narrative thematic content analysis, which includes identifying core stories in the broadly Labovian tradition, taking into account other supporting constructions. While content is the key interest, attention is also paid to context and co-construction. Following Mishler's (1999) suggestion, contextualised and lengthy exemplars are used in the reporting in Chapters 4-6 that follow.

4. Analysis of Harbour Focus Groups

4.1 Introduction

As presented in Chapter 2, Section 2.6, the central research question is: how are group ecological identities constructed? Following focus group data collection and thematic content narrative analysis as described in Chapter 3, this Chapter reports on that analysis. Chapter 4 is the first of three successive Chapters which, in total, report on the analysis of six focus groups – two from each of the three identified Hout Bay communities (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.4 and 3.5). These are supported by excerpts from detailed transcriptions of the sessions.

This Chapter reports on the analysis of the two Harbour community focus groups, namely, Harbour Focus Group One (HFG1) and Harbour Focus Group Two (HFG2), which were conducted in 2004. Details of the composition of HFG1 and 2 are presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1 and Appendix 5. In brief, Section 4.2 provides details of the focus groups, Section 4.3 discusses specific translation issues. Section 4.4 presents a thematic analysis of select core narratives and excerpts, in order of construction during the sessions. As discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3, core narratives reflect in part the 'and then' temporal sequencing of events which flow through five narrative elements, namely, Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation and Resolution/Coda. Central to such stories are plot and evaluation. Notably, not all narrative elements may be evident. This approach is an interpretation of the Labov-Waletzky model and what Mishler (1986b) refers to as the search for the meaning of the story. In Section 4.5 key findings from HFG1 and 2 are compared and contrasted, and Section 4.6 concludes with a summation of key findings.

4.2 Focus group sessions

4.2.1 Recruitment and organisation

Two Harbour focus group sessions were conducted in January 2004, at the Hout Bay Library. This is a well known and familiar Hout Bay community resource, proposed by participants during the recruitment process. Audio-recordings of both sessions were approximately two hours. Ella, a recognised community elder, assisted in the recruitment of participants (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2). All confirmed participants attended the sessions. These groups were held first because the successful recruitment of participants was achieved first. (See also Appendix 6).

4.2.2 Participants

HFG1 and 2 comprised 13 participants, seven in HFG1 and six in HFG2, and me, as moderator. Ella, who assisted with recruitment, actively participated in HFG1 and was present in HFG2. This was primarily in response to sensitivities concerning the research interest in the environment and participants' perceived association with their increasingly challenged dwelling in Hout Bay. She also assisted, where necessary, with translation and local terms, especially insider terms regarding references to people as well as the names of significant places and activities. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide gender and age details of participants, using pseudonyms. Participants are presented in order of their initial responses to Topic 1 (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3).

All participants had lived in Hout Bay for more than 20 years, some since birth and others from a young age. In HFG1, only two participants stated that they lived in their 'own home'; others rented, of which, two rented in a commune and one as a squatter. In contrast, in HFG2 most participants noted that they lived in their 'own home'. The two exceptions were one who squatted and another who noted 'other' home living status. Three HFG1 participants had no children and four had between two and four children. In

HFG2, two participants had no children and four had between two and seven children. All participants lived with members of their family – mostly immediate family but also

Table 4.1: Pseudonyms, gender and age of HFG1 participants – in order of responses to Topic 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age category
John	Male	40-49 years
Matt	Male	40-49 years
Delia	Female	21-29 years
Jack	Male	21-29 years
Debbie	Female	30-39 years
Ella	Female	50 + years
Julia*	Female	40-49 years

*Julia arrived late. A handout, in bullet format, covering the introduction to the session, requests to use a name tag, engagement etiquette, confidentiality and other ethical issues including a request for consent was discretely given to Julia. This handout was a benefit of the pilot study experience, when I had to wait, at length, until latecomers were present to cover key aspects of the introduction. When asked if she gave her consent, Julia noted that she did. This was also followed up at the end of the session.

Table 4.2: Pseudonyms, gender and age of HFG2 participants – in order of responses to Topic 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age category
Carla	Female	50 + years
Abe	Male	21-29 years
Harold	Male	50+ years
David	Male	30-39 years
Olga	Female	30-39 years
Violet*	Female	40-49 years

*Violet arrived late. A handout and consent as followed with Julia in Table 4.1.

extended family. Participants listed their home language as, variously, English, English and Afrikaans (and vice versa), or Afrikaans. This exemplifies the situation in the Harbour community where both languages tend to be used – and regularly spoken together in the same sentence. Such descriptions provide insight into how this community dwells, its apparently close, everyday living arrangements with family and familiarity with Afrikaans and English as their everyday language/s. (See also Appendix 5)

Providing insight into social identity constructions, all HFG1 and HFG2 participants described themselves as spiritual. All participants presently lived in the Harbour area. Most HFG1 participants, and half of HFG2, defined their cultural background as

'Coloured'. The exceptions were, in HFG1, a participant who described her/himself as 'South African', and in HFG2, three participants who, respectively, described themselves as 'Mixed', 'Mixed (Rainbow Nation)', and 'Muslim'. This data raises the possibility that, at least some, Harbour community members were conducting identity work and in so doing considering themselves as part of the new, democratically governed, multicultural South Africa. This is, especially, evidenced by the shift from descriptions of being Coloured, a traditional term used to describe communities of mixed race in South Africa, to South African, Mixed, and Rainbow Nation (a reference to the new South Africa) (see also Chapter 1). Although more ambiguous, the reference to being Muslim could be interpreted as such an expression – having the political freedom and respect to be and state who one is in the new South Africa. Notably, under apartheid rule, South Africa was constitutionally committed to the humble submission to 'almighty God' (see for example: Republic of South Africa Constitution Act No. 110 of 1983 (South African Government Information, 2004)). However, even if the expression of being Muslim only reflects a strong particular spiritual or religious commitment, the new politics of South Africa gives room to that expression.

Most participants in HFG1 and 2 had some level of secondary school education or secondary school leaving qualification; and a HFG1 participant was in the process of completing a tertiary education qualification. All participants in HFG1 and 2 also listed various formal and informal qualifications and skills, such as, education facilitation, administration and management, boat skippering, gardening, motorcar mechanics and housekeeping. Participants' stated annual incomes indicated a wide range of earnings. HFG1 participants reported earning annual incomes of between less than R12000 to R120001-R240000, of which three earned less than R12000 and two earned between R60001-R120000. Five out of the six HFG2 participants reported annual earnings of R12001–R60000; and one reported earning R60001-R120000 per annum. This indicates, that in terms of monetary income, the majority of Harbour participants were financially challenged. Significantly though, almost all participants in HFG1 and 2 were employed.

The two exceptions were a student (HFG1) and a pensioner (HFG2). Additionally, recalling that most participants had secondary education and skills as well as homes, of which only a few rented and squatted, it can be said, that although their incomes were relatively low, they had a measure of socio-economic wellbeing. (See also Appendix 5)

4.2.3 Flow of topics

This section briefly presents each focus group's interactive engagement on topics from the topic sheet (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1). Topics 1 and 2 were directed to participants in order of their seating (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.4.3 and 3.5.2). Throughout the session, constructions often intertwined topics, suggesting that ecological identity, as constructed by groups, is comprehensive rather than topic specific.

The duration of time participants engaged on topics is based on audio-recording duration linked to approximate transcript line ranges. Times are presented in minutes, and seconds are rounded. Undue consideration should not be paid to the transcript line numbering. The main purpose of the line numbers is to link the analysis to the transcript and provide contextualisation. In respect of the reporting of HFG1 and 2, apparent disparities between the number of transcript lines spent on topics is attributed, in part, to line spacing differences in the two transcripts.

a) Topic 1: What does it mean to you to live Hout Bay?

HFG1 and HFG2 spent approximately 12 minutes and six minutes respectively on this topic, in their opening responses (see HFG1: Lines 001-217 and HFG2: Lines 001-066). Two core narratives, presented in Section 4.4, namely, Story 1a (HFG1, Box 4.1) and Story 2a (HFG2, Box 4.4), were respectively constructed during these initial engagements. Participants, in both groups, were prompt in their responses to Topic 1. HFG2 participants' responses were more succinct than those in HFG1; a consequence of which was HFG2's initially brief attention to this topic. From the start of the sessions, in both groups, participants presented themselves as community members; emphasising the

importance of their social community rather than social self or individual positions, in this context. In both groups, participants' responses consistently mentioned their *environmental values* (Topic 3), in particular, the value of their 'community' as embedded within their traditional home (Hout Bay) environment. Other topics mentioned were *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5) and *children and the environment* (Topic 6).

b) Topic Two: Sensitisation of the terms environment and nature

HFG1 and HFG2 spent 20 minutes and eight minutes respectively on this topic (see HFG1: Lines 218-610 and HFG2: Lines 067-166). There was a notable degree of consensus among participants within and between HFG1 and 2, regarding definitions of environment and nature. Although participants responded more from a position of social self their responses flowed comfortably. Responses to Topic 2 also mentioned the *meaning of Hout Bay* (Topic 1), *environmental values* (Topic 3) *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5) and, occasionally, *children and the environment* (Topic 6).

c) Topics 3-6

Topics 3-6 were not directed to each participant in sequence. Groups also regularly interwove Topic 1 into their constructions. Additionally, HFG2 revisited Topic 2. The following summation, on a focus group basis, provides an indication of the flow of topics and engagement time, as the sessions progressed.

HFG1

Participants engaged for approximately 22 minutes (Lines 611-1083) on the meaning of Hout Bay and their environmental values (Topics 1 and 3 respectively). Constructions reflected personal and group values. Story 1b (Box 4.2), presented in Section 4.4.1, was constructed during this engagement. Notably, this story's abstract and orientation were constructed during responses to Topic 1 (between Lines 001-217) and complicating action during responses to Topic 2. This distance between narrative contributions reflects how

this group developed their stories, often returning to earlier constructions to further develop them.

Participants then briefly engaged, for about five minutes, on *spirituality and the environment* (Topic 4) (see Lines 1085-1186). Participants' responses also mentioned environmental values (Topic 3). Social self rather than group perspectives came to the fore in this engagement. This suggests that spirituality is more of a personal interpretation. Following Jack and Julia's use of the *terms nature and environment* and my subsequent prompting, the group revisited Topic 2 (engagement time: three minutes – Lines 1187-1264).

Emphasising their understanding of these terms (Topic 2) provided a seamless route into a discussion of *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5). This engagement also mentioned *environmental values, spirituality and children and the environment* (Topics 3, 4 and 6 respectively). However, it was the meaning of Hout Bay (Topic 1) that emerged as the focal point of their constructions. Towards the end of this extensive engagement, Story 1c (Section 4.4.1, Box 4.3) was constructed. (Overall engagement time: 43 minutes - Lines 1265-2353)

In these constructions participants continued to be socially attentive of one another as community members, even on the rare occasion when differences arose. Such an occasion arose during the discussion of *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5), where the general consensus was of valuing community knowledge and skills as well as resourcing knowledge about their environment from the local community newspaper, the 'Sentinel'. While valuing their community, Julia and Debbie presented two different social self positions that conflicted, in part, with this consensus. Julia's argument rested on her valuation of God and God's directed knowledge and skills above that of humankind. She contrasted the biblical story of creation with humankind's narrative of evolution (see Lines 1282-1283; 1359-1397). This part of the engagement further underscored the differences

between group positions and more personal views involving *spirituality and the environment* (Topic 4). As discussion moved on, Debbie later noted that, as someone involved in education, she valued formal education as a source of *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5). Such education, she claimed, had taught her about erosion which enhanced her awareness of the environment in which her community was embedded. Additionally, while participants had personal particular views regarding their *children and the environment* (Topic 6), a group position, regarding this topic, emphasised concerns about their community's future generation and ultimately their community's future in Hout Bay. This discussion brought the session to a close.

HFG2

From Topic 2, participants went on to discuss the specifics of their dwelling in Hout Bay, where Hout Bay was presented as their community home environment. This discussion mentioned, the *meaning of Hout Bay, environmental values and children and the environment* (Topics 1, 3 and 6 respectively), (engagement time: 43 minutes - Lines 167-670).

The discussion then briefly turned to *spirituality and the environment* (Topic 4), where participants presented personal positions (engagement time: Three minutes - Lines 670-702). Participants then swiftly moved on a discussion of the *meaning of Hout Bay, environmental values and children and the environment* (Topics 1, 3 and 6 respectively). In this discussion they also provided a group perspective regarding Topic 4. In this instance the emphasis was on a group position, which they noted was beyond any personal commitments to, for example, Catholicism or Islam (see Lines 713-717). It was they narrated, about being a member of their Harbour community, where their community was likened to being 'one big family' (see Lines 717-720). This engagement lasted 10 minutes (see Lines 702-808).

The meaning of Hout Bay (Topic 1) was the focus of some further probing and this engagement was intense. Participants engaged intensely, producing constructions which illustrated an extensive resourcing of shared and familiar knowledge about their community, including its presentation as historically and uniquely, embedded in Hout Bay. *Environmental values, environmental knowledge and skills* and *children and the environment* (Topics 3, 5 and 6 respectively) were mentioned in this engagement which lasted 20 minutes (see Lines 809-1063). Towards the end of this time, Story 2b (Section 4.4.2, Box 4.5) was constructed.

I then probed further in respect of *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5). A series of connected narratives then followed. These resonated with previous narratives and primarily concerned *the meaning of Hout Bay* (Topic 1). Their community's historical and traditional relationships with the sea and land/property ownership were especially topical. These constructions further mentioned *environmental values, environmental knowledge and skills*, gained mostly from everyday experiences and to a lesser extent local and national media, and *children and the environment* (Topics 3, 5 and 6 respectively). Participants' also revisited their *interpretations of environment* (Topic 2). The bulk of this engagement spanned Lines 1064 until the formal end of the taped session, transcribed to Line 1447 (engagement time: 25 minutes).

4.3 Translation

As evidenced in both sessions all participants were conversant in English, but, on occasion, would use Afrikaans words and local names. While I am conversant in Afrikaans and a local resident, I also probed to clarify meaning and drew on participant interaction for further insights. For example, participants would often use the English version of the word/s initially presented in Afrikaans as well as include details of a locally named place. Such co-constructive contributions and participants' deft and extensive narrative constructions further supported their meanings. An example can be found in Story 1b (HFG1, Box 4.2 - see Lines 077-080; 508-509). Such means of interpretation distance the

data from the original meaning. However, this combination of interpretation checks was pragmatic and effective in ensuring *in situ* rather than *ex situ* translation.

4.4 Thematic content narrative analysis

Three core stories from HFG1 and two from HFG2 are presented together with additional excerpts, as examples of critical constructions by the groups. Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 present the analysis on a per focus group basis. Each of these two sections comprises three parts beginning with *the meaning of Hout Bay* (Topic 1) followed by initial *interpretations of nature and environment* (Topic 2) and groups' further constructions of themselves in respect of the environment.

4.4.1 Harbour Focus Group One (HFG1)

a) *Harbour community of Hout Bay, a good life (Topic 1)*

Participants, except Julia who arrived late, constructed remarkably similar social self stories of the significance of Hout Bay (see Lines 001-217). As will be discussed, the significance of Hout Bay was presented as 'being that of their community'. Participants engaged as members of the same community in respect of the broad content of their stories, the way in which they followed a similar construction and the way in which they were socially attentive. Responses were fluently constructed, with participants evidently drawing on shared community knowledge as well as conveying a familiarity with the meaning of the stories.

The similarity of participants' constructions was evident in their similar referencing of their birth in Hout Bay and/or that they grew up in Hout Bay, often also noting their age and/or a reference to how long they have lived in Hout Bay. For example, Delia noted that she had lived in Hout Bay for her 'entire life' (Line 058); and Matt mentioned that he wasn't born in Hout Bay, but had moved there when he was 'seven or eight' and had lived there ever since (see Lines 029-036). John also noted he wasn't born in Hout Bay, he couldn't recall exactly when he had moved there, other than that it was when he was young and not

initially with his parents (see Lines 003-027). However his baseline questionnaire responses regarding age and time lived in Hout Bay indicate that he moved here when he was 10 years or younger. These references were usually presented in participants' narrative orientation – presenting them as orientated as Hout Bay Harbour community members. Strategically, these references also linked participants' biographies to the Harbour community which was presented as embedded in Hout Bay. By this I mean they linked their personal stories to the story of their Harbour community. This suggests an attendance to community membership not only in content, but also in the act of knowing how to be a community member. This in itself was evidence of social attendance. However further community membership delineations and social attendances were also apparent. For example, Delia, one of two 21-29 year old participants in HFG1, immediately drew attention to this aspect in her response to Topic 1. This was followed by an appreciative group laugh, after which Delia gave her age and underscored that she was speaking from 'her perspective' – almost as if to say she knew as the 'youngest' she did not have the authority to present a group or community position (see Lines 053-056). Jack, the other young participant, similarly immediately drew attention to his age and that he had lived in Hout Bay all his life (see Line 074). The oldest HFG1 participant, who also spoke last in this sequence, was Ella. In contrast to Delia and Jack, she immediately opened by asserting that she had the authority to speak for their community (or group) on the grounds of her age. She stated,

“Oh I remember Hout Bay cause I am the oldest here” (Ella, Line 145).

She then continued with a story of how their community used to dwell in Hout Bay. This also illuminates another aspect of the way in which Ella, who also assisted with recruitment, might be perceived by the other participants. Essentially Ella had influence because she was a community elder. Although presented in a research setting, this dynamic, would also have been evident within their everyday dwelling as the Harbour community.

It is apparent from the position from which participants narrated, namely, as community members, the acceptance thereof by other participants and the familiarity with their community story, that community membership did not rest on whether members were born in Hout Bay or not – or in the community or not. Rather the emphasis appears to be on community members knowing who their community was and acting as a community member. Although specifics about the experience were absent, there was also an emphasis on participants' early formative relationship with the Harbour community, even though some participants' parents may not have been community members from a young age.

Being a Harbour community member was about being a member of a 'very close' community, 'like a family' (see Ella: Lines 201-209). It was about a valued 'bond between the people' in this 'community' (see Delia: Line 060). Notably, participants' stories resonated as a *group* story which presented their community, as that which was significant to them regarding Hout Bay. Their community, as inextricably narrated as embedded in Hout Bay, was about a valued good life – as loyal, close community members. This surpassed references by John and Ella of their community's former dwelling in the Valley and Harbour prior to their present community home only in the Harbour area (see Lines 003-027 and 145-217). These references drew on the tacit knowledge that their present community home in the Harbour had been politically engineered under apartheid rule (see also Chapter 1). This suggests a local community narrative which defined the Harbour community on its own terms, namely that their good life was about being the Harbour community as a closely bonded community, rather than as a politically determined community. However, some participants, such as Delia and Ella, expressed a disquiet regarding their changing experience of Hout Bay – although this was not fully elaborated upon at this early stage of the session (see Lines 056-063; 145-217).

Story 1a (Box 4.1) is an example of participants' initial, personal yet group, narratives of the meaning of Hout Bay. In this story, Debbie attends to her community membership by first narratively orientating herself as born in Hout Bay as a 'holiday baby' (Line 111) then later, as a young child, settling in Hout Bay. The significance of Hout Bay, Debbie narrated, was revealed to her through her 'new experience' (Line 118) of attending school outside of Hout Bay, on the 'other side of the mountain' (Line 119). She realised that being a member of her community, as embedded in Hout Bay, was about warmth, security and safety. She underscored this warmth by emotionally declaring her 'love' (Line 124) for Hout Bay. These valued and positively presented attributes, Debbie felt, could not be experienced elsewhere (see Lines 124-126). With a sense of familiarity, Debbie speaks of

Box 4.1: Core story 1a – Love, security and safety of the Harbour community as embedded in Hout Bay (Debbie, HFG1)

Orientation

109 Debbie: um, my family is originally from [seaside place near Hout Bay]
 111 I'm a holiday baby I was actually born in Hout Bay. And um seven years
 112 later we actually moved to Hout Bay. Cause I was seven when I got to
 113 Hout Bay. Went to school here.

Complicating Action

113 [sigh] Um .. then when I had to go to high
 114 school..
 118 Debbie: that was quite a new experience, very scared of..um.. this big new place
 119 that on the other side of the mountain –

Evaluation

121 Debbie: because you grow up sooo..so protected here that um... the "place over the
 122 mountain", on that side of the..can be a little bit of scaredy for you.

Resolution/Coda

124 Debbie: So umI actually do love Hout Bay um .. there's no other place like it.
 125 There's no other community like it.... I don't think I will ever move out of Hout
 126 Bay.

'the mountain' (Lines 119; 122), as defining Hout Bay (see also Chapter 1). Her narrative reference to this physical, non-human entity suggests that it is a personification, a form of metaphor, of her community as embedded in Hout Bay. Debbie's narrative resolution/coda can be viewed as a strong assertion of her loyalty with a faint inference of disquiet regarding her future dwelling commitment to her community in Hout Bay.

b) Early definitions of environment and nature (Topic 2)

HFG1 defined environment as their surroundings, for example, 'everything around me', 'whole surroundings' (see John: Lines 223-225; 234-236), 'what I see' (see Julia: Line 309). Participants emphasised Hout Bay as *their* environment in contrast to other environments. Jack and Debbie noted that environment also referred to the 'whole world' (Jack: Line 449) or 'whole planet' (Debbie: Line 455). Nevertheless, Debbie, emphasised, 'Hout Bay Harbour' (Line 463) as her emotionally meaningful environment, which included,

"the people in it, the place itself ...and what goes on around there"
(Debbie: Lines 463-464).

Environment was interpreted as more than what they saw, what they aesthetically valued, it was about the 'whole picture' (Matt: Line 248), including activity and consequences thereof. For example, in respect of Hout Bay, environment was about the activity, feeling and visual interpretation of overcrowding and the loss of 'greenery' - such that, the perception was that Hout Bay was losing its 'Valley' ecological identity (see Lines 246-277). Notably, Debbie, in the quote above, emphasised the activity of her community as part of the meaning of the environment. Debbie also defined environment emotionally and as an everyday dwelling opportunity in which people could define and re-define themselves socially (see Lines 475-490).

Environment was about humans and non-humans, risk, about the 'mountains', 'sea' and 'plants' as well as people (see, for example, Julia: Lines 309-371). Most HFG1 participants, with the exceptions of John and Delia who did not make specifically do so,

considered the Hout Bay environment, in terms of what they imagined it to be like, its ecological character, in the future. For Julia this concerned her children's future experience of Hout Bay (Lines 362-363); for Matt, Jack and Ella it was about imagining a transformed environment where Hout Bay had lost its valued ecological identity (see Lines 038-051; 074-103; 145-217); while for Debbie it was about the possibility a politically transformed Hout Bay could have in 'broaden[ing]' her emotional ecological relationships, her identity, beyond the Harbour to the wider Hout Bay, the 'bigger picture' (see Lines 109-143).

Participants struggled to define nature separately from their definition of environment. During the session, participants also tended to use environment rather than nature. This suggests that they did not use nature, typically in everyday conversation. Jack, Julia and Matt did, however, attempt to define nature. Later in the session, Jack declared that he considered nature to be a part of 'everything', of environment (see Lines 1197-1202). While Julia included nature as part of the environment, she also considered it separate from it on the basis that nature was not of humankind (see Lines 368-376). According to Julia and Matt, people had a moral duty to preserve nature even if they felt they were not 'doing much' to preserve it in practice (see Lines 374-378). This brief mention was later supported by Julia's, more personal, narrative about Creation, wherein she expressed her belief that God created everything and people have a moral responsibility to care for nature and/or the environment (see Lines 1395; 1421-1423).

HFG1 did not provide complete and/or comprehensive definitions of environment and especially nature. In part this may be attributable to focus group dynamics and in part the suggestion that such terms are deeply tacitly known and experienced in practice. Notably HFG1 presented environment as that which they (as individuals and as a community) were ecologically *embedded* in, what surrounded them, that in which everyday dwelling activity – social and ecological – was immersed in. Equally, Hout Bay was an emotionally

meaningful environment to them, in which particular aspects of the environment were especially significant. For some, nature was about a moral duty, a way of dwelling.

c) *Struggling to retain and maintain their identity as a South African community*

Initial constructions, as presented, including Story 1a (Box 4.1), suggest that HFG1 was part of a community which strongly defined themselves as the Harbour community of Hout Bay. However, some participants expressed a slight sense of disquiet regarding their present experience of change in Hout Bay. Stories 1b and c (Boxes 4.2; 4.3) illustrate HFG1's constructive development, over the course of the session, of this concern and how this change was perceived as posing a threat to their sense of identity and belonging.

- *Story 1b: First Beach (Eerste Strand) and the helipad*

Story 1b (Box 4.2) is a story of the Harbour community and HFG1's perceived risk to their identity and belonging in Hout Bay. It specifically reconstructs the community experience of an important ecological relationship between it and a particular beach in Hout Bay and its transformation into a helipad. Like their early session responses, in this story, participants biographically link themselves to their community's ecological biography. As such their stories about First Beach are linked to their community story about First Beach (for example, see Lines 508-523). Story 1b presents HFG1's community as ecologically empowered and disempowered, as well as uniquely embedded and disembedded, in respect of their emotionally significant relationship with First Beach (Eerste Strand - as they sometimes refer to it, using the Afrikaans version of their name for this beach).

In developing this narrative, HFG1 claimed that First Beach was *their* beach (see Lines 077; 517). The story of this beach was presented as the story of the Harbour community and vice versa. It was an expression of the Harbour community's unique ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay. This beach was presented as an expression of the good life as Harbour community and a symbol of their community's ecological identity. The beach was presented as part of a dynamic ecological relationship with the Harbour community.

Box 4.2: Core story 1b - First Beach and the helipad (HFG1)

Abstract

(Topic 1)

Orientation

(Jack's opening gambit narrative (starting Line 074))

Excerpt:

076 Jack: but ah what I can say about Hout Bay, it has changed a lot [Deleted]
077 [Deleted] we used to call the ah 'Eerste Strand' [First Beach] and
078 a 'Tweede Strand' [Second Beach] so the 'Eerste Strand' is gone now
they made a helicopter
079 landing spot
080 [Group murmurs]
081 Debbie: but that's just now, mmm

Complicating Action

508 Debbie: Oh that First Beach story that that really got me good because whoever
was
509 responsible for that made a big mistake and I was still a child then
[Deleted]
510 [Deleted] But now that I'm an
511 adult, I don't agree with that. Taking First Beach away, it was, it was like
totally
512 wrong
515 Debbie: they didn't even ask the community..
517 Debbie: and I mean according to us First Beach was our beach -

Evaluation

519 Debbie: because as a child I used to go swim there -
521 Debbie: never mind about the ah them saying that um.. it's in the Harbour and it's
full
522 of fibre glass there's oil, I didn't care about that as a child. I used to go
there
523 [Deleted] used to go swim there..

524 now there's this ugly gravel pitch, that's been standing there nobody has
been

525 using it and now um um a month ago I see there's a helicopter pad ...

526 Ella: Hout Bay International

528 [Group laugh]

529 Debbie: I can't go on that helicopter. I can't afford it. None, I don't think [Deleted]

531 Ella: mm

532 [Group laugh ; and unclear group comments e.g. 'most cant afford']

534 Debbie: most..cant afford to go on it and even if they can afford it they're gonna
think

535 twice about going on it -

536 Ella: mm

537 Matt: you can understand me

538 Debbie: kids to school and it has no value whatsoever..to..the, -

539 Debbie & Matt: Harbour community

540 Matt: Ja, ja

657 Julia: [Deleted] I came down, [Deleted]

658 [Deleted] in November and I saw on this land was this grass. And I

659 wondered: But how could it grow so fast? -

660 [Group laugh]

661 I couldn't and then my mother said: No, it is that instant grass. And I said:
Oh

662 [Deleted] that's when I saw this Hout Bay International Airport [Deleted]

668 [Deleted] It's a more modern

669 helicopter it doesn't make that..big noise anymore

671 Julia: It's got some silencer in I suppose but still, we, nobody was, consulted

672 regarding it [helipad],

674 Ella: mm

675 Julia: you know? And a a for me its like people intruding, you know?

676 Ella: mm

677 Julia: We don't even know if this person's from Hout Bay,
[Deleted]

681 how is it benefiting Hout Bay? [Deleted]

685 Julia: After they're gone what's going to happen? are they, going, to pack up, and

686 move with their grass? What's going to happen?

688 Are they now going to convert it into a community park or what are they
going
689 to do? We, nobody knows

Resolution/Coda

692 Julia: [Deleted] there's such a lot of things they done so far,
693 without, us the residents of Hout Bay and I mean everybody in Hout Bay
living
694 here
696 Julia: We -
697 John: Hout Bay residents
698 Julia: normally, don't know what's happening. [Deleted]
704 Julia: [Deleted] we live in the dark
705 like this. It It It You feel a wee bit insecure...don't know what's happening
709 Julia: [Deleted] the next, minute, there'll be a, huge runway with Boeings and
710 jumbos and things
711 [Group laugh]

In the everyday type activity of this relationship, Harbour community members socially engaged one another as well as ecologically engaged this beach. This includes the reflexive social consideration of the experience of this beach which in itself is about re-experiencing and re-determining meaning. The narrative infers that as a community, as children, they used to go there and swim there (see Lines 077-078; 508-523) interacting with themselves and the beach-sea. The inference was that the reality of the beach as less than perfect was not central to their experience and their interpretation of the meaning of the beach. The presence of pollutants, such as, 'fibre glass' and 'oil' were not the focal point (see Lines 521-522). What was important was that First Beach was their beach; their unique relationship in and with Hout Bay. Although unstated, this narrative's meaning is further enhanced if one appreciates the tacit knowledge, that during the apartheid era, non-Whites were politically confined to non-white beaches. In view of this knowledge, First Beach represents a form of ecological empowerment, of ownership (which is finally lost by the helipad development), of ecological identity construction by this community on their terms beyond that of political direction.

The risk to who they are and their belonging in Hout Bay, was constructed by HFG1 (see Story 1b), as implicit in their loss of significant community ecological relations within Hout Bay. First Beach, as the narrative resolution/coda illuminates, was an exemplar of HFG1's perception of the pervasiveness of the threat to their belonging in Hout Bay and ultimately their identity. The loss of their First Beach was presented as a loss of their community's critical relationship with Hout Bay, the loss of a defining relationship and a way of everyday belonging. From a critical, secure and certain ecological relationship with First Beach, as experienced during the apartheid era, the narrative shifted to the construction of an insecure and uncertain relationship with what was formerly their First Beach. This began with the infill of First Beach such that their relationship was transformed into a relationship with an 'ugly gravel pitch', perceived as no use to anyone (see Lines 524-525). This relationship was further transformed with the more recent development of the 'Hout Bay International' helipad, on what was formerly First Beach (see Lines 078-079; 525-529; 657-662). The infill and helipad developments were presented as not being about their community. They 'can't afford' the helicopter rides, instead focussing on other priorities, such as, the education of their children (see Lines 529-540). Both developments were seen to have occurred without their consultation - without their involvement and respect for their sense of identity, their ecological relations within Hout Bay, or respect for their community (see Lines 508-517; 657-711). They were also seen as not benefiting their community (see Lines 523-537; 681-689). As with other developments in Hout Bay, the participants felt they were in the 'dark' – uninformed about their meaningful surroundings (see Lines 696-711). They felt uninvolved, uncertain and 'insecure' (see Lines 692-698) to the extent that HFG1 perceived their relationship with First Beach as increasingly meaningless and not about them. Story 1b presents their community as increasingly distanced and ecologically disempowered and disembedded and non-synonymous with Hout Bay - and it with them.

Notably Julia did not always concur with this group narrative (see Lines 657-689) . Julia presented an alternative interpretation of Hout Bay's helicopter-helipad development. She

described the helicopter-helipad positively, framing it as 'modern', a wonder of science and technology with a helipad made from 'instant grass' and a helicopter with a 'silencer'. Nevertheless, Julia ultimately deferred to the group narrative. This was on the grounds that it was done without the consultation of their community and where it didn't appear to have a plan to benefit their community. This development, she asserted, was about people who were conceivably not from or of Hout Bay, who intruded - who were uninvited - and did not appear to have Hout Bay's interests at heart.

Group laughter punctuated references to their transformed First Beach (see Lines 528; 532; 660; 711). Although difficult to interpret, this laughter has a sense of poignancy and a sense of how HFG1 manages the sense of ecological risk to them. Story 1b ends with a humorous exaggeration of the imagined extent of future development in Hout Bay (of 'jumbos' and 'runways' and 'things'), which was also followed by group laughter. This reinforces the interpretation of their use of humour and laughter as one way in which they manage their ecological risk.

Almost all participants vocally participated in the construction of Story 1b. The group as a whole was constructively engaged. This is evidenced by group laughter (for example, see Lines 528; 532; 660; 711) and intense, sometimes unintelligible, interaction (for example, see Lines 080; 532). Additionally, Delia, who did not appear to be vocally engaged in this narrative, subsequently illustrated that she had, at some level, been engaged. Evidence of this was her confirmation that the story of First beach was also her story, where,

"the 'First Beach' I know the First Beach even from like.. when, I was young. I know 'First Beach' and it was OUR little beach – [Deleted] I even I have a lot of photos of the 'First Beach'" (Delia: Lines 803-807).

Story 1b was constructed amidst a stream of stories and constructive contributions. As with Story 1b, these focused on participants' resonant concerns, as social selves and community members, regarding their perceptions of the ecological risk posed by the changing ecological character of Hout Bay to their belonging and their identity. For

example, Delia felt that development had altered the 'space', such that, she experienced Hout Bay as 'very thin and remote' - becoming unnatural in character (see Lines 070-072). Matt, narrated that Hout Bay was becoming 'crowded', 'tightened', losing its valley character to housing development as well as the 'township' development (South African term typically referring to an informal settlement), such that, what he valued, its 'beautiful scenery', its 'shrubs and trees', its 'clean environment' was being lost, taken away (see Lines 250-304). As a consequence, he worried about the future of his family, especially his children, in Hout Bay. Likewise, Jack wondered about the future of Hout Bay. He imagined that the development driven destruction of the familiar character of Hout Bay would mean that Hout Bay would no longer be about a Bay of wood - after which it is named (see Chapter 1) – instead, it would become 'House Bay' (see Lines 429-435).

In Story 1b and these other constructions, HFG1 as a group and as individual participants, constructed a deeply emotional, biographical disjuncture between themselves as community and Hout Bay the historical home of their community, where they as community members had dwelt since their early formative years (see early responses to Topic 1). Change lay direct claim to their ecological relations and identity. However, Julia, again contrary to the group position, noted that the paradox of change – of ecological risk - was that while development was altering their significant relations, their belonging, within Hout Bay, it was also enhancing their dwelling in Hout Bay through socio-economic benefits. Hout Bay was 'bustling', jobs were been created, and people weren't 'dying' because of a lack of income (see Julia: Lines 645-654).

- *Story 1c: Fishing quotas and the Harbour fisherpeople*

Story 1c (Box 4.3) is another example, of HFG1's construction of their community as uniquely, ecologically embedded in Hout Bay – engaged in emotionally significant ecological relations and empowered within those relations. It is a story about the perceived ecological risk to their community, specifically, the risk to their significant and defining marine relations. This narrative was constructed towards the end of the session,

Box 4.3: Core story 1c - Fishing quotas and the Harbour fisherpeople (HFG1)

Abstract

1917 Debbie: Our quota system is a big mistake

1918 Julia: Aha

1921 Debbie: They didn't ask the people, they didn't ask the fishermen. [Deleted]

Orientation

1922 Debbie: [Deleted] for example, I've known Uncle

1923 Vicky all my life....he used to stay next to us. Uncle Vicky would, wake up,

1924 you could hear him [Deleted] he would be

1925 calling men that would go out on the boat with him

1927 Debbie: And he would go to sea and that was his life. That is all he knew

1928 Matt: mm

Complicating Action

1929 Debbie: But last year the man didn't get a quota. He couldn't go to sea and catch
one

1930 little fish.

Evaluation

1930 And I couldn't understand now how..I think we've got a a wonderful,

1931 a wonderful Constitution

1933 Debbie: And.. I think, they've done, great things but I couldn't understand how, they

1934 could allow something like that to happen

1935 Matt: mm

Resolution/Coda

1937 Debbie: How could they allow allow this to happen to a person whose gone to sea
all

1938 his life? [Deleted] he cant go to sea

1939 because the law tells him that he cant go cause he hasn't got a quota or

1940 hasn't got a permit

1941 Matt: quota

1943 Debbie: to go to sea. [Deleted] that's one mistake [Deleted] they make mistakes.

amidst several similar ecological identity constructions of the Harbour community as fisherpeople. In telling this story, its meaning can be said to extend beyond the story of

Uncle Vicky, who was a fisherman, to echo other Harbour fisherpeople stories. Their relationship with the sea was presented as fundamental to their ecological definition as fisherpeople and a critical way in which they belonged, ecologically, within Hout Bay. This relationship was about living their good life in Hout Bay. Debbie's reference to 'our quota system' (fishing quotas) 'the people' and 'the fishermen' indicates it is about her community as a fishing community – something that appears to be about the activity within an ecological relationship, a way of dwelling as a fisherperson in Hout Bay and symbolic of their community as ecologically embedded in Hout Bay (see Lines 1917-1921). Julia also appeared to confirm Debbie's claim that the 'quota system' was a mistake (see Line 1918).

Fishing as illustrated in the telling of Uncle Vicky's story was about everyday social relations with others in the Harbour community. Examples are: Debbie, his neighbour, hearing him wake up and call for the fishermen; and Uncle Vicky's implied relationship with other fishermen as part of his interaction with the sea including marine resources.

The ecological risk presented in this narrative is that of fishing quotas. One learns from Story 1c that this was interpreted as more than a legal control on access to the sea and marine resources. It was about their relationship with the sea as being negatively ('mistaken[ly]') affected by South Africa's democratic government's interpretation of South Africa's 'wonderful Constitution'. Story 1c contrasts the everyday ecological dwelling practice of fishing, a way of belonging and defining themselves, with wider social institutional relations between the fisherpeople community and the government (and the 1996 Constitution). As such, ecological risk is presented as inherent in social and ecological relations that were local-particular and national-broad. Ecological risk was also presented as inherent in the apparent disjuncture between an historical and present way of knowing themselves as fisherpeople and their present day political definition of themselves as part of South Africa's democratic commitment. For example, Debbie declared that it was their 'Constitution', 'we've got' 'a wonderful Constitution' (see Lines

1930-1931). This construct illuminates a sense of expectation, that the ecological relationship between identity and dwelling should be recognised by South Africa's Constitution (1996) and democratic government.

Following this narrative, HFG1 continued to appraise their perceived ecological risk posed by fishing quotas to their livelihood and fisherpeople identity (see Lines 1944-2217). This extended engagement provided supporting insights. There was, for example, an appreciation of the government's, sustainability informed, legislative regulation regarding access to marine resources. However, they reiterated their concerns in respect of the administrative interpretation of quotas. A key part of discussion was the formal quota application criteria and process. According to HFG1, more valid criteria, would be those that were grounded in everyday practice, such as, a) whether one worked directly with the sea, b) fishing knowledge and skill, for example, knowing how to assess good quality crayfish and when they can and can't be caught, and c) whether one's claim to be a fisherperson could be authenticated by observing their physical presence on a fishing boat. HFG1 challenged the government to 'come down' to the 'wharfs' to see who the 'real fishermen' were (see Lines 2061-2069). As Matt declared, a '*bona fide*' fisherperson (see Line 2055), was someone who,

"works with his hands in the sea and if by by doing it they live er he he he his livelihood is out of the sea" (Matt: Lines 2051-2053).

This extended engagement suggests that Story 1c was a group narrative about the Harbour community and that it was a reconstruction of a story in wider circulation within their community. The construction of Story 1c was actively driven by Debbie, Julia and Matt. Other participants did not contest the claims made. Participants were also apparently aware of what Debbie's mention of the 'quota system' referred to, with Matt even correcting Debbie's use of the term 'permit' (to 'quota'). Following Story 1c, Matt drove a construction in which Julia, Debbie and Ella also participated, regarding their community as fisherpeople and the quota system (see Lines 1946-2217). Again this is

evidence that such stories were reconstructions of a story in wider circulation within their community – a story where they defined themselves ecologically as fisherpeople, and as belonging as such in Hout Bay.

4.4.2 Harbour Focus Group Two (HFG2)

a) Harbour community members of Hout Bay, a good life (Topic 1)

HFG2 participants presented similar narratives in which their membership of the Harbour community was central (see Lines 001-067). Participants similarly interpreted the significance of Hout Bay, as their community home – a good life. As evidenced in these early narratives, participants knew what and how to present themselves as community members and engaged on this basis. Even so, they also presented specifics about themselves as social selves, such as, where they had been born. However, as will be discussed such details resonated with the expressions of other participants to form a *group narrative*.

In introducing themselves and the meaning of Hout Bay, participants similarly referenced their birth and/or their upbringing in Hout Bay. Abe, for example, spoke of being a family member who was generationally rooted in Hout Bay (see Lines 013-021); Harold asserted that he had been 'born and bred' in Hout Bay (see Story 2a, Box 4.4); and Carla noted that she had been born elsewhere but had settled in Hout Bay with her parents when she was a baby (see Lines 003-011). Notably Violet, who arrived a little late to the session, did not make mention of whether she had been born or moved to Hout Bay nor how long she had lived there for (see Lines 056-066). Participants, such as, Carla, Harold and Olga also mentioned their age giving a perspective on the length of their relationship with Hout Bay. Notably, Harold had been born in Hout Bay but felt the need to emphasise the length and/or his age regarding this relationship (see Story 2a, Box 4.4). These resonant expressions suggest a way of being a community member, in terms, of content and social

attendance. These expressions also illustrate a biographical linking of participants to the Harbour community – or at least Hout Bay.

Harold's initial narrative (Story 2a, Box 4.4) is an exemplar of HFG2 participants' initial responses to Topic 1 (the meaning of Hout Bay). As with other participants, Harold's narrative underscored his personal valuation of Hout Bay, most especially, the 'closeness' of the people who live there. Harold expressed this sense of belonging and identity in his construct: 'born and bred in Hout Bay'.

In Story 2a (Box 4.4) Harold also presented himself and his community at risk, the severity of which had made him 'seriously' (Line 037) consider leaving Hout Bay – leaving his community. This was a more dramatic construction, than compared to other HFG2 participants' responses, although David, who followed Harold in response sequence, largely concurred with his position. David noted that life was now unsafe and not 'the same anymore' in Hout Bay – an experience that made him feel unhappy. He also thought that life was difficult elsewhere and so he chose to 'make the best' of his dwelling in Hout Bay and making an effort to make it 'a better place' (see Lines 039-050). Abe, whose response preceded Harold's, also raised some concern as to the threat to his family's continued generational rootedness in Hout Bay, claiming their history was being 'extinguished' (see Lines 013-021). However, further details were absent. Some participants were also more pragmatic and conciliatory regarding the changes in Hout Bay. For example, Carla noted that she had lived in Hout Bay all her life, had got 'used to it' and intended to grow old there (see Lines 005-011); and Olga felt that she still liked where she lived, qualifying that she felt it was 'quiet' although it could be considered 'rough' in comparison to elsewhere (see Lines 052-053). These constructions suggest that being a Harbour community member and dwelling in Hout Bay was perceived as a good life and a not so good life, but ultimately the better life option for them.

**Box 4.4: Core story 2a - Born and bred in the close community of Hout Bay
(Harold, HFG2)**

Orientation

025 Harold: I am born and bred in Hout Bay. My parents grew up in, in Hout Bay. I think
it's
026 a lovely place to stay in. The, the closeness of the people

Complicating Action

026 but the young generation
027 growing up now, it makes Hout Bay a difficult place to stay.

Evaluation

027 I myself, personally feel to
028 move out.

030 Harold: [Deleted] Because of the young people, the young generation that's coming
up now.

031 [Delete] They're not like us before, defending Hout Bay.

032 Hout Bay was one street in, one way street out. Life is not the same
anymore. Lots of
033 changes. Influxion of people, different kinds of people. We feel threatened
in Hout Bay.

034 We are born here but we still own nothing. With the quota systems and
everything. We
035 feel, there, they use us. When they get what they want from us, they leave us
standing.

Resolution and Coda

036 And I am [50+] years old and I still can't prove nothing for these [50+] years
working for big
037 firms, [local fishing company] and all those firms... and I am seriously thinking
of moving out of Hout Bay.

Harold's construction of risk to his community presented Hout Bay as synonymous with his community (see Box 4.4). This construction also illuminated a deeper meaning of being born and/or bred in Hout Bay, namely, that Harbour people were empowered as community members as uniquely embedded in Hout Bay. It was also about close community bonds. Harold asserts that a combination of different changes in Hout Bay,

were threatening his community. He felt these changes were significantly complicating dwelling in Hout Bay – it was no longer a ‘one street’ type place (see Lines 032-034). In part, Harold noted, there were changes within his community, where ‘young’ community members were perceived as being disloyal and/or not invested in their community as meaningfully embedded in Hout Bay (see Line 030-031). Such change can be said to weaken the Harbour community’s close bonds and ecological relations within Hout Bay.

Shortly after this construction, Abe, Olga, Violet, Carla and David similarly raised their concern regarding the daily activities of certain Harbour members that were viewed as negatively impacting their dwelling in Hout Bay (see Lines 205-255). Examples given were: abuse of drugs and alcohol, gangsterism, vandalism and crime in their community (see Lines 205-212; 471). Other changes were said to relate to the influx of ‘different kinds of people’ into Hout Bay and the ‘quota systems’. This construction of risk can therefore be said to be framed by modern dwelling within a democratically governed South Africa. Dwelling was presented as more complicated, more unknown, less certain and more risky, that is, dwelling was about an increasingly modern lifestyle.

Although, implicit in Harold’s construction of Story 2a, when he extensively drew on intersubjective knowledge within HFG2, Harold also presented South Africa’s political transformation to a democratic government as part of the ecological risk to his community. Ecological encompasses human (social) and human and non-human relations (ecological). This was evident in his implicit and explicit references to ‘different’ (Line 033) people, who were now all politically free to choose to settle in Hout Bay and fishing quotas which were introduced recently by the democratic government as part of its interpretation of the Constitutional commitment to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment (see Chapter 1). This was said to threaten his community’s social (community/ies) and ecological (for example, community and the sea) embeddedness in Hout Bay.

Notably, in a subsequent narrative, Harold provided further insight into the meaning of the influx of different kinds of people (see Lines 279-296). He asserted that it wasn't about race; rather it was about their expectation of 'good', respectful dwelling practices, where people looked out for one another – whether Coloured, White or Black. This was a moral reference which other participants similarly noted. Olga, for example, felt that there were 'all sorts of people' (Line 186), who had come to Hout Bay, who didn't 'care' for the environment and kept 'ruining things' (see Lines 189-191). Abe, like Violet, was concerned about political abuse, where people abused each other, including, financially, mentally and many other ways (see Lines 212-214; 232-233).

Returning to Story 2a (Box 4.4), the irony, according to Harold, was that they were the 'born and bred' community of Hout Bay, yet their experience of political change, rather than empowering them (as anticipated) through the formal recognition of their social-ecological relations in Hout Bay, had disempowered them – left them used and 'standing'. In a similar manner, Harold also referred to his lifetime of employment with 'big' fishing firms and yet having nothing to 'prove' for it today. There was an implied expectation of the new political circumstance as a means to redress past injustices, where as a Coloured his relationship with the sea had been economically confined to employee status only, according to the apartheid policy direction (see also Chapter 1).

Like other participants', Harold biographically tied his story to the story of his community as embedded in Hout Bay. His story became part of the broader story of his community and vice versa. Harold's switching between his story and the 'we' story of community further underscores this interpretation. So for example, he was 'born and bred' in Hout Bay (Line 025) was linked to the community narrative of, 'We are born' (Line 034), in Hout Bay and yet 'we still own nothing' (Line 034). As other participants' engagement further suggests, it was also about knowing how to be a community member. For those who moved to Hout Bay when young, such as Carla, this construction was strategic, that is, intending to impart a certain way of viewing their community membership. I contend that

this emphasis was about knowing how to be a Harbour community member, including being emotionally invested in the community and its unique embeddedness in Hout Bay. As Abe, later remarked, Hout Bay was a 'little country on its own', a 'tranquil environment', a 'Republic of Hout Bay' (see Lines 543-553).

Participants' initial and subsequent responses indicated that family was considered to be the core social unit of their community. For example, Abe's initial response, focused on his family's generational rootedness in Hout Bay (see Lines 013-021); and participants, such as Carla and Harold, spoke of their parents as part of the meaning of Hout Bay, in their initial responses (see Lines 005-011; 025). Later, Harold and Violet re-emphasised the importance of family within their community. It was important, Harold claimed, for Harbour families to remain together in Hout Bay (see Lines 319-328). Similarly, Violet remarked that,

"Family should be everywhere together" (Violet: Line 782).

This illuminates an important social bond, underpinning the 'closeness' of this community. Nevertheless, the significance of Hout Bay, as noted in HFG2, was ultimately about being a community member, whether as social self or family.

b) Early definitions of environment and nature (Topic 2)

According to HFG2 participants, environment comprised humans and non-humans, specifically: people, the beach, trees, buildings, flowers, garden[s], nature, resources, animals and mountains (see Lines 067-166). Environment was also described as what was around them, whether they were in Cape Town or Hout Bay. As Abe noted, it was especially about,

"your living space, your area that you find yourself in, your working environment" (Abe: Lines 112-113).

Environment was about their dwelling activity and experiences, involving human and non-human interaction, such as, poverty, the 'whole life thing', overcrowding, pollution and

walking on the beach (see Lines 070-193). Abe also defined environment as an everyday dwelling opportunity in which one could pursue a 'good and comfortable life' (see Lines 270-273). This interpretation also formed part of his response to Topic 3 (*environmental values*). However, other participants also interpreted environment, within their Topic 2 responses, as being about what they valued, human and non-human, beautiful things and everything, including flowers and trails (see Lines 070-193). It was about valued 'good and clean', happy experiences of the environment (see Lines 132-134). This latter interpretation presents a moral interpretation of environment which is elaborated upon in HFG2's interpretation of nature.

Most participants did not initially define nature (and all participants tended not to use the term nature throughout the session). When prompted, Carla noted that she didn't interpret environment and nature differently (see Lines 135-139). Abe considered that the environment and nature went 'hand in hand';, that nature existed independently and people could view it and where people were involved they were also part of nature (see Lines 152-166). Such involvement was about dwelling in a manner consistent with nature, such as not 'disrupting' nature by littering (see Lines 159-162). It was this dwelling notion, a moral code, which the group especially engaged upon and concurred with. It was about dwelling in a manner which was appreciative ('caring') of the 'beauty' of the environment; dwelling which was considerate of 'everything' (see Lines 182-193). It was about, not 'misuse[ing]' nature (see Lines 169-171; 178-180); it was,

"like what Violet said: everything that concerns us [Deleted] things that affect you, that you see around you that are happening" (Carla: Lines 122-124).

HFG2 provided descriptive details rather than definitive interpretations of environment and nature. Their descriptions were also not complete and/or comprehensive. In part this may be attributable to focus group dynamics and in part the suggestion is that such terms are tacitly known and experienced in practice and not articulated as abstract academic definitions. Notably HFG2 presented environment as that which they were ecologically

embedded in, what surrounded them, in which their everyday dwelling activity – social and ecological – was immersed in; and in which a moral code of dwelling in respect of nature existed.

c) *Struggling to retain and maintain their identity as a South African community*

As in the aforementioned initial constructions, participants were not at ease with the changes in Hout Bay. Following their initial responses, participants spent the bulk of the session discussing these changes and consequences, in particular, the perceived threat to their community and its embeddedness in Hout Bay, their sense of the good life and how they belonged and how they defined themselves. The numerous constructions that emerged paints a picture of their community as manipulated and monopolised (see, for example, Abe: Lines 599-601; 977). Their environment was perceived as been taken 'away piece by piece', by self interested people and institutions, resulting in a 'totally' changed Hout Bay (see Lines 283-289). Story 2b (Box 4.5) is an example of this wider narrative and the extensive mention, by participants, of their community's meaningful marine relations. The analysis of this story is supported by additional excerpts.

- *Story 2b: The manipulation and monopolisation of our community's local marine relationship by the fishing companies*

Story 2b (Box 4.5) is a story about the Harbour community and HFG2's perceived risk to their community's embeddedness in Hout Bay and their identity narrative. In this exemplar, this threat specifically concerns fishing companies ('factories') who were presented as failing to respect and continue investing in the intertwined social and ecological relations between themselves, the Harbour community and the sea. This story is about Harbour people who are presented as being of the sea, who have worked in the fishing industry all their lives, 'our' fathers and mothers (see Lines 981; 989; 991-993; 1006-1009). It's about a people who defined themselves in practice and symbolically as fisherpeople of Hout Bay. Story 2b brings to the fore, HFG2's, perception of the manipulation and monopolisation of their community's key ecological relations with the

Box 4.5: Core story 2b - The manipulation and monopolisation of our community's local marine relationship by the fishing companies

Orientation

981 Violet: That's the same peoples running the factories are part of these men on the sea.

Complicating Action

982 Violet: Now, they've got the factories. In return they had to look back. They don't look back

983 now.

Evaluation

988 Harold: [Deleted] There are some companies. If you go and you ask someone, can't
989 you buy a taxi to take the old people to go and drop them, they tell you in your face we

990 are not a charity company. But in their application, in their original application, they

991 mentioned they are going to help the community. We talk about the people.

992 Violet: And what I've discovered over the years is that people that have worked in the
993 factories their whole lives, they're out.. they like cut them off. [Deleted]

1005 Olga: I feel, I feel like, the [mention of fishing companies], their

1006 fathers worked before them. It's the community of Hout Bay's people that work on their

1007 vessels.

Resolution/Coda

1007 Olga: They owe this community. Never mind what they say. They owe the
1008 community. The factories that's built there, it's built on our fathers' blood.

[Deleted]

1009 [Deleted].Our mothers' didn't know when they go to sea or if they'll return.
They hoped that

1010 their husbands returned

sea by those who are self-interested. Notably, social relations are viewed as part of ecological relations.

In Story 2b, fishing is presented as a good life pursuit, with some fisherpeople who were eventually able to own factories and those, namely, their community members who were not and who remained employees in the fishing industry for their whole lives. Violet, Harold and Olga claim that while they had all been involved in the establishment of the local fishing industry, only certain people had benefited. This narrative drew on tacit local and intersubjective knowledge, in particular, that under apartheid rule, when the fishing industry was under development in Hout Bay (see Chapter 1) 'non-Whites' were socially and economically discriminated against and as such were unlikely to have been able to legally own a business or factory. The narrative can therefore be said to implicitly contrast White people who benefited under apartheid rule with themselves, as 'non-Whites', who did not benefit – despite their toil and, at times, risking their lives. It is on this basis that the claim of the fishing companies owing the Harbour community is presented. It is a claim that rests on an historical ecological relationship – one of great significance to the Harbour community. That such a claim can be made is also grounded in the tacit intersubjective knowledge that it is now politically possible for non-Whites to have rights and to seek redress or recognition of their past and present socio-economic relations (see Chapter 1).

In this context, the narrative is ultimately a moral claim about ecological relations, of which, socio-economic relations were a part. Similarly the request to fishing companies for social assistance or investment in their community and the present lack of such investment was seen as a deep sense of betrayal of the social-ecological relations. Such a betrayal illustrates an experience of the Harbour community of the present day political circumstance and how South Africa's Constitution (1996) is interpreted in everyday life.

Notably, prior to the construction of Story 2b (Box 4.5), Abe presented fishing quotas as a means to realise a good life from a relationship with natural resources (an ecological relationship), (see Lines 217-245). He also, similarly with respect to Story 2b, asserted that their community had rights to local marine resources based on the involvement of generations of community members in the local fishing industry, such as, community

'housewives' who started working in the industry around age 12 or 13 years and those community members who worked at sea for sixty years. He contrasted this community experience with self interested 'groups' including 'big corporate firms' who enjoyed a 'lush and plush lifestyle' in Hout Bay, from the benefits of their abuse of others.

Story 2b resonated with the numerous other constructions, spanning most of the focus group session suggesting it is an example of one of several reconstructions of a manipulation and monopolisation narrative in wider circulation within their community.

4.5 Comparing and contrasting key findings between Harbour Focus Groups

The analysis of HFG1 and 2, revealed four central similarities between the groups, namely, their a) ecological presentation of themselves as Harbour community, of Hout Bay living and pursuing a desired good life, b) tacit ways of defining environment and nature, c) presentation of themselves as ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled and d) a sense of ecological risk. For the most part, groups' constructions were similar with few notable differences.

Harbour community members, pursuing a valued good life

Both groups presented themselves as Harbour community members, in terms of constructed content and social attentiveness. Their fluid engagement and familiarity with stories told, within and between the two focus groups, further underscored this interpretation. By way of insight, the Harbour community is the Cape Coloured community in Hout Bay, which during the apartheid era were politically directed to reside in the Harbour surrounds (see Chapter 1). Most HFG1 participants and half of those in HFG2 also defined themselves as 'Coloured' in their baseline questionnaire responses. However, these are but one way of defining identity. Other interpretations suggest some HFG2 participants also defined themselves in respect of the democratic principles to which, present day South Africa is committed.

Family was mentioned by participants in both groups but in HFG2 it was evidently presented as a core social community unit. However, ultimately both groups emphasised the importance of being a community member – whether as individual or family. Notably, according to their baseline questionnaire responses, all participants had lived in Hout Bay for more than 20 years (see Appendix 5, Figure A5.3).

It was evident that being born and/or brought up in Hout Bay was regarded as an important, but not definitive requirement to be a community member. In other words, community membership did not depend on whether someone had been born or not in Hout Bay. Rather the emphasis was on knowing what and who their community was, knowing how to be and acting as a community member. A critical part of this involved linking of personal biographies to the story of their community, as embedded in Hout Bay, such that, an individual's story was the story of their community and vice versa. The Harbour community (and its early formative Hout Bay experience) was thus an emotionally significant relationship for participants. It was about close community bonds and the feeling of, protection, security and certainty that their community offered them.

Tacit definitions of environment and nature

Despite the partial and or lack of comprehensive definitions, HFG1 and 2 presented similar yet slightly different definitions of environment and nature. For both groups, environment was about what surrounded them, human and non-human. They similarly also emphasised their dwelling environment, Hout Bay. However, some reference to other environments was also made. Additionally, two HFG1 participants presented a global/universal interpretation of environment as the 'world' or 'planet'. Both groups' interpretations of environment were visual as well as about activity and experience within the environment. Several HFG1 participants interpretations of environment also indicated their consideration of environment in terms of the future and how they imagined their (and for some, their childrens), future experience of the environment, most especially Hout Bay.

Participants in both groups tended not to define nature separately from environment and throughout both sessions they tended to use the term environment. However, two HFG1 participants briefly presented an interpretation of nature as something of value for which people had a moral responsibility. In contrast HFG2 presented a more consensual moral interpretation. Environment, as HFG2 participants concurred, was about being involved in a moral dwelling in a manner in which one respected or did not abuse nature. From this perspective environment and nature were interpreted as going 'hand-in-hand'; where nature could be viewed separately in instances when people dwelt in a manner that was morally contrary to the laws of nature.

Being ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled as Harbour community

Both groups worked to present themselves as Harbour community members of Hout Bay, that is, about how they belonged. Hout Bay was presented as their community home. For example, in Story 1b (HFG1, Box 4.2) and Story 2b (HFG2, Box 4.5) groups presented themselves as knowing the story of Hout Bay as the story of their community and vice versa. Such stories were about themselves as uniquely and deeply emotionally, ecologically *embedded* – engaged in human (social) and human-non-human (ecological) relations – in Hout Bay. Notably, ecological relations are presented as encompassing social relations. In this context, HFG1 and 2 similarly presented themselves as knowledgeable and skilled in their ecological relationship with the sea - see Stories 1c and 2b (Boxes 4.3; 4.5). This was an important construct in their ecological identity construction and their construction of who they were and how they belonged within Hout Bay. Additionally, HFG1 and 2's presentation of themselves as Harbour community members, in the core stories was inherently moral. There was an expectation that their community's ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay should be respected by others, as well as an inferred interpretation of themselves as rightfully (morally) ecologically embedded in Hout Bay.

HFG1 and 2 constructed risk as threatening to, and also emerging from a set of interconnected cause and effect sequences linked to the community's social-ecological existence within the environment. As discussed earlier, HFG1 and 2's constructions indicated that being members of the Harbour community, as ecologically embedded and empowered in Hout Bay, was about 'a good life'. This, according to HFG1 and 2, was threatened by the increasing distancing and disembedding (loss) from their unique and deeply meaningful ecological relations within Hout Bay. For example, their distancing and disembedding from their relationship with their First Beach (HFG1, Story 1b, Box 4.2) and from their relationship with the sea (HFG1, Story 1c, Box 4.3; HFG2, Story 2b, Box 4.5). This distancing and disembedding was from the activity itself within these relationships and also the symbolism of these relationships. The consequences of which were viewed, by both groups, as threat to their ecological identity and how they belonged within Hout Bay.

Risk was constructed as arising from human and human-non-human relations in Hout Bay. As narrated, in HFG1, the ecological risk to who they were and how they belonged in Hout Bay arose from other people who were developing their surroundings, such as, the modern helipad development on what was their First Beach (Story 1b, Box 4.2). Such people were presented as possibly not even being from Hout Bay. This was in terms of where they came from as well as their perceived values, such as, being self interested rather than interested in Hout Bay ecologically - most notably with respect to ensuring that the Harbour community also benefited from their development. In Story 1c, risk was also, said to arise from an institutional misinterpretation by South Africa's democratic government of its human rights based Constitution (1996). An interpretation evidenced in fishing quotas which was seen as not benefiting and more especially not respecting the Harbour community's historical and unique relationship with the sea. Similarly, as narrated, in HFG2, the failure of local fishing firms or factories to recognise the significance of the relationship between themselves, the Harbour community and the sea,

and as a consequence not investing in the Harbour community, was interpreted as a core risk to the Harbour community. Such firms were seen as abusing their community and their marine relationship despite the changing political circumstance in which relations with non-Whites were recognised and an address of past injustices pursued. Notably in Story 2a (HFG2, Harold, Box 4.4) and additionally presented excerpts which were linked to Story 2a and b (Boxes 4.4; 4.5), HFG2 also makes mention of those within their community, such as the young generation, as also been other (not of their community) because of their self interest or lack of interest in their community and its embeddedness in Hout Bay. In all three stories there is a sense of ecological injustice, of immoral activity with significant consequences, namely, the ecological disembedding and disempowerment of the Harbour community in Hout Bay.

Both groups felt that they were becoming an uncertain, fearful community, increasingly distanced and excluded from their meaningful ecological engagement within Hout Bay and whose ecologically knowledgeable and skilful dwelling in Hout Bay was increasingly undermined by development and their experience of dwelling in an era of democratic government. Hout Bay was ironically becoming about their good life and their not so good life as Harbour community.

This discussion of risk illustrates the intricacy of the challenges, as perceived by HFG1 and 2, to the Harbour community's ecological identity, grounded in Hout Bay and their ecological belonging in Hout Bay, in the context of present day South Africa with its dramatically transformed political landscape.

4.6 Conclusion

The analysis of HFG1 and 2 found that both groups interpreted environment as their surroundings and what they visually perceived. It was also interpreted sensually and emotively in the activity of ecological engagement and experience; where they viewed themselves as immersed in the environment as Harbour community, particularly of Hout

Bay. The meaning of the environment was dynamic, unfolding in their everyday dwelling, which involved social and, more widely, ecological relations. Both groups tended not to define or use the term nature. When interpreted, by a few participants, nature was presented as something of inherent value which humans had a moral duty to care for which can be understood as their moral ecological perspective.

Both groups presented their core identity as Harbour community, historically and uniquely ecologically embedded in Hout Bay. This was underpinned by the tacit ethnic consideration of themselves as 'Coloured' (Cape Coloured). Notably, at least one HFG2 participant also presented her/himself as being of the politically transformed South Africa. Regardless of whether one had been born or grew up in Hout Bay, Harbour community membership appeared to be premised on knowing how to be a community member. Nevertheless, growing up in Hout Bay was presented by participants in both groups as a notable life experience. Ecological identity construction was morally framed. The inference by both groups was of being rightfully embedded and ecologically engaged in Hout Bay as the Harbour community. Both groups also presented themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilful. They knew the story of their community and how it was also the story of Hout Bay and, vice versa, they knew how to be community members and they knew how to skilfully engage in the activity within their significant ecological relationships with the sea.

Being a Harbour community member dwelling in Hout Bay was presented as a good life. It was a life - a way of dwelling, a way of belonging, a way of being - that they had pursued, presently enjoyed and would like to continue enjoying. However, both groups felt that this good life was significantly challenged by the threat, posed by the values and activities of others, to their deeply meaningful Hout Bay ecological relations and unique and historical ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay. This threat was about ecological risk, linked to their own interconnected ecological relations within the community, socially with other people (HFG1 and 2) such as developers (HFG1 and 2) and fish factory owners (HFG2),

the government (HFG1 and 2) and/or disinterested Harbour youth (HFG2). Ecologically, this sense of identity focussed most especially on the sea (HFG1 and 2), but also with other meaningful non-human aspects of Hout Bay, such as, First Beach (HGF1).

Ultimately this ecological risk threatened HFG1 and 2's ecologically positive interpretation of themselves as Harbour community, belonging in and of Hout Bay. Notably only HFG2 reflexively considered certain dynamics within their community as also being a part of this risk. There was a sense of this risk presenting an immoral outcome. Part of this involved their consternation regarding their interpretations and expectations of how they would continue to belong and define themselves within democratically governed South Africa.

5. Analysis of Valley Focus Groups

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 reports on the analysis of the two Valley community focus groups, conducted in 2004, namely, Valley Focus Group One (VFG1) and Valley Focus Group Two (VFG2). These sessions were held after the Harbour focus groups (Chapter 4). Details of the composition of VFG1 and VFG2 are presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.5 and Appendix 5. The following analysis of the VFG1 and 2 discussions explores their ecological identity constructions of which their interpretations of environment in particular area a key aspect (see Chapter 2).

The introduction to Chapter 4 covers some of the details pertaining to this Chapter and as such these are not repeated here. This Chapter follows a similar layout to Chapter 4. In brief, Section 5.2 provides details of the focus groups and Section 5.3 presents the thematic analysis of select core narratives and excerpts, in order of construction during the session. In Section 5.4 key findings from VFG1 and 2 are compared and contrasted, and concluding comments are presented in Section 5.5.

5.2 Focus group sessions

5.2.1 Recruitment and organisation

Two Valley focus group sessions were conducted in May 2004, at my home Bayvillas office, in Hout Bay. This was the choice of participants who, as discussed in Chapter 3, were presented with several possible options including those provided by those approached during recruitment. Audio-recordings of both sessions were approximately two hours. Two participants in VFG1 and one in VFG2 cancelled shortly before the sessions were due to start. Through a referral chain of possible alternate participants, following up suggestions from those who had cancelled, I was able to recruit a further

participant for each of the sessions. Reasons cited for cancellation were either not given and/or were attributed to other sudden commitments. (See also Appendix 6)

5.2.2 Participants

In total there were 11 participants, five in VFG1 and six in VFG2, and me, as moderator (see Appendix 5 for selected demographic details). Gender and a range of age groups are represented in both groups' compositions. Nevertheless, due to recruitment challenges, VFG1 lacked the range of age groups as represented in VFG2 and is one female participant less than VFG2.

Due consideration is given to participants' right to confidentiality. This includes the use of selective and modified demographic details, sourced from participants' baseline questionnaire responses (see Appendix 2). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide gender and age details of participants using pseudonyms. Participants are presented in order of their responses to Topic 1 (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3). This information together with baseline information provides an introduction to participants and an indication of the groups' compositions.

All participants were Valley residents and White. Most of the participants had lived in Hout Bay between six months and 11 years. Two participants from VFG1 and one from VFG2 had lived in Hout Bay for more than 20 years. Three participants, in each focus group, stated that they lived in rented homes; one participant, in each focus group, stated that he/she lived in their own home; one and two participants, from VFG1 and VFG2 respectively, stated that they lived in a home provided by family or a relationship partner. All VFG1 participants noted that they had children – ranging from two to four children. Only two VFG2 participants noted that they had children – one and three children respectively. Participants with children vary in terms of whether their children lived with them presently or not. In both focus groups, no extended family members were reported as living with participants. The majority of participants in both focus groups listed English

as their home language - the exception was a VFG2 participant whose home language was French. Although age profiles were different, the data suggested that the focus groups comprised people who had relocated to Hout Bay from elsewhere, especially in the last ten years, who did not always own a home in Hout Bay, some of whom lived in a family unit, others on their own or with a partner and all were conversant in English. (For further details see Appendix 5)

Table 5.1: Pseudonyms, gender and age of VFG1 participants – in order of responses to Topic 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age category
Claire	Female	40-49 years
Lynne	Female	50+ years
Richard	Male	40-49 years
Lance	Male	50+ years
Glenn	Female	30-39 years

Table 5.2: Pseudonyms, gender and age of VFG2 participants – in order of responses to Topic 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age category
Zara	Female	21-29 years
Ron	Male	30-39 years
Brandon	Male	21-29 years
Nancy	Female	50+ years
Vivien	Female	40-49 years
Joshua	Male	30-39 years

Providing further insight into social identity constructions, all participants described themselves as spiritual. This may or may not include religious belief. Two VFG1 participants and almost all VFG2 participants also described themselves as ‘South African’. The exceptions were three VFG1 participants and a VFG2 participant. Alternate descriptions were: ‘African’ – suggestive of a broader identity construction; ‘Zimbabwean-South African’ – suggestive of biographical identity links to Zimbabwe and South Africa; ‘Jewish South African’ – underscoring the importance of faith in identity construction; and ‘European’ – suggestive of biographical identity links to Europe.

Participants, in both focus groups, were educated and skilled. All, except one VFG2 participant, held a secondary school leaving certificate; and all listed a variety of skills, training and tertiary qualifications, for example: linguistics, instruction, administration, real estate qualifications and tertiary degrees. The majority of participants reported an annual income between R60001 and R240000, with one VFG1 participant reporting earnings of more than R240000 and two VFG2 participants reporting an annual income of R12001-R60000. Most participants were also formally employed. The exceptions were one VFG1 participant who was supported by family due to medical reasons and two VFG2 participants, one who was a pensioner and the other a student. Taking into consideration home rental and ownership, education and skills, annual income and employment, the data suggests the majority of participants enjoyed a fair measure of economic affluence and social wellbeing. (For further details see Appendix 5)

5.2.3 Flow of topics

This section briefly presents the flow of topics during both focus group sessions (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1). Topics tended to be intertwined in discussion suggesting the integral character of environment in identity construction at the level of group. Topics 1 and 2, as mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4 (Sections 3.4.3; 3.5.2; 4.2.3), were directed, as per participants' seating. Line referencing and duration of engagement is as reported in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.

a) Topic 1: What does it mean to you to live in Hout Bay?

VFG1 and VFG2 spent approximately 15 minutes and six minutes respectively on this topic in their opening responses (see VFG1: Lines 001-479; VFG2: Lines 001-191). Participants' in both groups promptly presented their opening gambit responses. In both groups, Topic 1 was intertwined with expressions of their *environmental values* (Topic 3). Core stories 1a and 2a (Box 5.1; Box 5.4) were constructed during this section of the session.

In VFG1, some of the participants with children mentioned what environmental experience they desired for their children, as a critical consideration in their decision to move to Hout Bay and/or valuation of Hout Bay (Topic 6). *Knowledge about the environment and skilful dwelling* (Topic 5) was also mentioned by VFG1.

In VFG1 Claire, Lynne and Richard and in VFG2, Joshua and Vivien indicated that they had given some thought to the research subject matter prior to the sessions, although they also noted it wasn't something they typically did in such a conscious fashion.

b) Topic 2: Sensitisation of the terms 'nature', 'environment' and 'ecology'

These early interpretations of environment (and/or nature and ecology) provide critical insights during the analysis of ecological identity as constructed by VFG1 and 2. VFG1 and VFG2 spent eight minutes and five minutes respectively on this topic (see VFG1: Lines 481-797; VFG2: Lines 193-422). An additional term, ecology, was mentioned and discussed in (VFG1) and (VFG2), and prior to the sessions' audio-recordings and during recruitment. Notably, not all participants were comfortable with using the term ecology - several such as Glenn (VFG1) and Brandon (VFG2) stated they didn't use the word and didn't define it.

Responses to Topic 2, in both groups, indicated a slight disruption in the flow of group forming (Tuckman & Jenson, 1977; Finch & Lewis, 2003). This disruption and preference initially for social self interpretations, was likely an unanticipated consequence of the Topic guide and its directed, formal application, triggering a preference for self rather than group responses. Participants were unable to widely draw on shared community and/or group knowledge, as these terms or concepts were deeply tacitly known and/or illusive in succinct definition (as opposed to narrative definition) and/or not part of their everyday vocabulary. Further evidence of this was the lack of complete or comprehensive definitions and hesitant constructive efforts. However, partial definitions were also

attributable to interaction dynamics where participants were caught up in theirs and others interpretations.

In VFG1 several stories were constructed, branching out from their initial definitions. Other topics mentioned in these stories were: *environmental values* (Topic 3) and *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5). VFG2 tended to present succinct definitions with laughter as a core component in their co-construction of meaning.

c) Topics 3-6

Topics 3-6 were not directed to each participant in sequence. Additionally, sometimes groups revisited Topics 1 and 2. The following summation, on a per focus group basis, provides an indication of the engagement time on the different topics, as the sessions progressed.

VFG1

For much of the session, VFG1 spoke about their *environmental values* (Topic 3), together with their views on the *meaning of Hout Bay, defining environment* and *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topics 1, 2 and 5 respectively). Additionally, Glenn briefly connected her *environmental values* (Topic 3) with her desire for her *children* to practice and experience these values in the course of their everyday dwelling (Topic 6). Core story 1b (Box 5.2) was constructed during this part of the session. (Overall engagement time: 53 minutes - Lines 799 – 3580)

Despite having come together, during the session, as a group, participants responded to Topic 4 (*spirituality and the environment*) as social selves (engagement time: 21 minutes - Lines 3582 – 4345). All participants felt that the environment was spiritual. This discussion also mentioned Topic 3. Moreover, Topics 3 and 5 (engagement time: 10 minutes - Lines 4347-4752) were explored, by VFG1, towards the end of the session,

especially with respect to the everyday experience of the environment. Core story 1c (Box 5.3) was constructed during this part of the session.

VFG1 hardly mentioned *children and the environment* (Topic 6). I formally directed this topic to VFG1 at the end of the session (engagement time: 10 minutes – Lines 4751-5075). In responding to this topic, participants spoke from social self positions rather than group. In essence, parents wanted their children to appreciate their moral *environmental values* (Topic 3). Despite their efforts, most felt that their children lived by more consumerist values. This was viewed as disconnecting them from particular ways of dwelling and experiences in particularly valued environment/s (For an example, see Lines 4962-4968).

VFG2

Like VFG1, for much of their session VFG2 spoke about their *environmental values* (Topic 3). VFG2 also mentioned the meaning of Hout Bay and *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topics 1 and 5 respectively). During this discussion, VFG2 were especially focused on their moral ecological values. Core story 2b (Box 5.5) was constructed during this part of the session. (Overall engagement time: 53 minutes - Lines 424 – 2401)

Topic 4 (*spirituality and the environment*) focused on participants' emotions or feelings about the environment and/or nature. An example was of feeling of calm when breathing the air and walking on the beach (see Zara: Lines 972-1003). Others struggled to define their feelings yet at times were emotional about their dwelling experience in the environment (Lines 1037-1078). While the mention of these feelings was peppered throughout the preceding transcript sections, a formal address of Topic 4 spans Lines 874-1133 (six minutes).

This was followed by an engagement focused on *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5) which drew upon earlier constructions about their *environmental values* and

definitions of environment (Topics 3 and 2 respectively). Participants mentioned a range of environmental knowledge and value sources (Topics 5 and 3), from the position of social self, such as family, school, travel, television and direct experiences. These positions were developed into a brief group story about climate change (see Lines 2838 – 2905). (Overall engagement time: 21 minutes - Lines 2402-3112).

VFG2 tended not to mention Topic 6. The group briefly touched on *environmental values*, *everyday knowledge of their environment* and *children* (Topics 3, 5 and 6 respectively) – (see Lines 3357-3396). This formed part of the concluding phase of the session – where the emphasis was on Topics 3 and 5 (engagement time: 20 minutes - Lines 3114-3724).

5.3 Thematic content narrative analysis

Three core stories from VFG1 and two from VFG2 are presented together with contextual contributions, as examples of critical constructions by the groups. Core stories are presented as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.5 and as noted in the summation given in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 present the analysis on a per focus group basis. Each of these two sections comprises three parts beginning with the meaning of Hout Bay (Topic 1) followed by initial interpretations of nature, environment and ecology (Topic 2) and groups' further constructions of themselves in respect of the environment.

5.3.1 Valley Focus Group One (VFG1)

a) Valuing the rural and/or village character of Hout Bay (Topic 1)

All five participants opened with social self constructions, concerning, their intertwined social and ecological motivations for moving to Hout Bay, for example, Story 1a (Box 5.1). Personal reasons for this move also included social aspects, such as, relatives (Lance) and friends (Richard). Additionally, these initial constructions reflected a way of presenting

a story of social group membership, of presenting their *group* (see Lines 001-479). For example, narratives followed a similar content structure, including, mention by all participants, of having moved to Hout Bay from elsewhere. This was most often from Johannesburg, Gauteng (province), South Africa because they valued the anticipated rural-village experience living in Hout Bay would offer them. This does not imply that other Valley residents, in the wider population, were not born in Hout Bay. However in VFG1, it was notable that other, typically urban but also in some instances bush (wilderness), environmental experiences and connections preceded participants' specific choice to move to Hout Bay. Most participants also mentioned how long they had lived in Hout Bay, for example, Story 1a: Line 008 (Box 5.1). The exception was Glenn who did not specify a time period.

VFG1's attendance to a similar narrative content structure, biographically linked participants to Hout Bay - a linkage biographically located in their adulthood (see Section 5.3.2). It suggests the emotional importance of Hout Bay in participants' life stories as part of their on-going identity narrative. Furthermore, as the plot of the stories illustrate, it was about an emotional and social attendance to the way they were embedded and/or desired to be so in Hout Bay. For example, in Story 1a (Box 5.1), Claire highlighted the importance of the rural experience of Hout Bay.

No mention was made, at this stage of the session, to being a member of the Valley community in Hout Bay. This could simply be due to a reliance on tacitly shared knowledge, in a group composed only of white participants living in the Hout Bay valley.

The narrative of VFG1 appears to be that the meaning of Hout Bay was about being defined as people of 'rural' and/or of 'village'. In story 1a (Box 5.1), Claire, for example, underscored the importance of Hout Bay's 'rural feel, the openness' (Story 1a: Line 009). This construction resonated in other participants' introductions of themselves and the meaning of Hout Bay (Topic 1).

Box 5.1: Core story 1a – The importance of a rural feel (Claire, VFG1)

Abstract

Topic 1: The meaning of Hout Bay

Orientation

008 Claire: [Deleted] initially, cos I've actually been here 5 years. When I first came it was
009 very important the rural feel, the openness.

Complicating Action

009 Claire: But now with all the development coming
010 on, it's lost that feel for me.

Evaluation

010 Claire: So I'm feeling a little claustrophobic environmentally. It's
011 hard for me to watch all the land development and all the wildlife and that
getting
012 pushed around.

Resolution/Coda

016 Claire: So I'm, I'm not happy [laugh]...with all the progress

022 Claire: [Deleted] now there's no more rural fields so I'm going to have to look
023 elsewhere.

Hout Bay, as presented, was a chosen dwelling environment because it offered a desired rural and village experience. Additionally, Hout Bay was desirable because it was symbolic of how they chose to define themselves in respect of the environment. In some instances, the aforementioned, preceding urban dwelling experiences were also a push factor towards an environment, such as, Hout Bay which was seen to offer an antithesis dwelling experience. Examples are:

"I wanted to find village life and get away from the rat race in Johannesburg [Deleted] it [Hout Bay] was out of the city, you know, and the mountains and the sea. A different way of life and a smaller village lifestyle" (Glenn: Lines 188-199);

and

"as everybody said because of the rural atmosphere [Lynn: mm] out of the urban jungle – [Lynn: mm]" (Lance and Lynne: Lines 413-420).

To be rural and/or of village was about an intimate 'smaller village lifestyle' which centred on social and ecological relations involving humans and non-humans. Urban, however, was interpreted as a lack of social intimacy and fast paced dwelling – a 'rat race' as noted by Glenn (Line 189, above) characterised by a lack of intimate human and non-human relations – an 'urban jungle', a 'city' without close relations to 'mountains and the sea' (see Lines 188-199; 413-420, above). It was also, the wider VFG1 narrative inferred, about not being a part of certain 'development', 'progress' (Story 1a), or of their past social and ecological embeddedness in the 'rat race' (Line 189) or 'urban jungle' (Line 418).

Providing insight into the meaning of 'rural' and how it was directly connected to a sense of emotional well-being, in Story 1a (Box 5.1), Claire presents her notion of rural as a emotional experience, for example, 'rural feel' (Line 009), 'lost that feel' (Line 010), 'I'm feeling' (Line 010) and feeling 'not happy' (Line 016). That feeling links to the experience of Hout Bay, as an environment in which her social and ecological relations and embeddedness were articulated. Of all the participants, Claire was the only participant to emphasise the importance of ecological more than social relations. Nevertheless, her consternation regarding development was about intertwined social and ecological relations.

Such relations underscore the interpretation of the environment as dynamic. It also presents contrasts. This was inferred in Story 1a, by Claire's reference to valuing Hout Bay's 'openness' as contrasted by her perceptions of Hout Bay as an increasingly developed environment, which made her feel 'claustrophobic'. Claire perceived 'progress', a social pursuit, but one involving humans and non-humans (social-ecological relations), as resulting in 'land development'. The strategic reorganisation ('pushed around') of non-humans, such as, wildlife and rural fields links to concerns that Hout Bay was increasingly losing its rural, open character. This experience was deeply emotional, 'hard' to 'watch' for

Claire, suggesting the importance of being rurally, openly embedded in Hout Bay in Claire's definition of her social-ecological identity.

The evidence suggests that, although Hout Bay was valued by VFG1, it was, specifically, a rural and/or village quality that was valued and that was emotionally important in their social and ecological identity construction.

Given the extent to which Claire perceived the changing ecological character and experience of Hout Bay because of 'progress', she noted she was considering leaving Hout Bay (see Lines 016-023). Claire managed this ecological identity dilemma by laughing (see Line 016). Although difficult to interpret, it served to offset the seriousness of the issue and consequences under consideration – and possibly also reflects a management of self (see Goffman, 1990).

Richard, like the other participants, concurred with Claire's peripeteia regarding the changing meaning of Hout Bay. Richard's narrative of progress in Hout Bay was premised on a discourse of socio-economic and ecological difference (see Lines 033-184). He claimed that Hout Bay is been transformed, by progress, into a less desirable 'high volume environment' (Line 036). A state which, in his opinion, did not reflect Hout Bay's character nor 'what it could be' (Line 035). According to Richard this was due to questionable technical 'planning' (Line 034) which was not sensitive to the environmental value of Hout Bay. A point further underscored by his reference to the 'National Park' which surrounded Hout Bay (see Richard: Lines 076-077). Planning was linked to a particular socio-economic-ecological dynamic constructed by Richard. The essence of which was that the 'elite' (Line 063) in Hout Bay, with their 'lots more money' (Line 056), 'attracts' (Line 046) 'high density' 'residents' (Line 057), who poured in (see Line 183), also referred to as,

"the periphery, more of the fringe" (Richard: Lines 069-070),

who lived in areas in Hout Bay where there was poorly 'control[ed]' 'town planning' (Line 062). The result, especially because the 'periphery' (Line 069) enjoyed no benefits, was in his opinion, 'massive social problems' (Line 047) including, 'crime' (Line 097) which,

"produces a less attractive environment" (Richard: Line 101).

There is a sense that this is about what VFG1 desires, namely, as discussed, a rural-village environment and identity, been compromised. Richard also identified 'various [government] departments' (Line 149) as responsible for the poor planning, which constrained economic development and/or benefits (see Lines 151-155).

The extent to which these socio-economic group stereotypes and discourse of difference were shared by other participants was unclear (throughout the session). Other participants, for the most part, did not actively engage in Richard's construction. One could argue that a formal honouring (Goffman, 1990: 21) of Richard's position occurred, rather than agreement. Or perhaps that consensus was more complicated and/or delicate than could be expressed at this stage of the session. However, certain aspects of Richard's construction were picked up and expanded upon by some participants. Glenn, for example, stated that she agreed with Richard, 'whole heartedly' (see Lines 190-191) in respect of the impact of development, regarding the constraints of roads in Hout Bay to meet the needs of its population (see Lines 191-193). While Richard framed his discourse of difference with the rhetorical question,

"You take how much you can absorb and still live peacefully" (Richard: Lines 40-41),

Glenn wondered,

"are we going to cope [with development]?" (Glenn: Line 192).

Notably, Lynne in a later construction of her definition of environment, nature and ecology, also employed the language of difference (see Section 5.3.1, Part b). In respect of the group argument regarding development, Lynne, similarly, was of the opinion that Hout

Bay had 'changed tremendously' (Lines 213-214); obscurely noting that there was merit in what Richard had said (see Lines 234-249). However, Lynne was more accommodating of this change and hinted at a wider interpretation of Hout Bay, in respect of her identity, beyond rural-village to that of home. For example, she noted that over the 20+ years that she had lived in Hout Bay she had become familiar with the change and was of the opinion that there were 'certain aspects' of change that 'we' should 'contend with' (see Lines 253-256). Given that Lynne also perceived Hout Bay as still having a 'rural atmosphere' (Line 257) her comments can be interpreted as meaning change was something they had to accommodate rather than actively contest.

Lance, concluded, noting that he agreed with,

"what everybody else has said, that it's [Hout Bay] fast becoming urbanised. [Lynne: mmhm]. Compared to what I knew before. [Claire: mm]" (Lance, Lynne and Claire: Lines 472-479).

Throughout the rich and slightly diverse interpretations of the meaning of Hout Bay, this summation of Lance's appears to sum up VFG1's main peripeteia, namely, that development was changing the desired and chosen social and ecological character and experience of Hout Bay. The significance of this was that Hout Bay's perceived rural-village social and ecological character and experience was presented as particularly desired and chosen by VFG1. This inferred that this desired rural-village good life, a central part of who they were, was increasingly not synonymous with the changes to Hout Bay. The exception was Lynne who, as discussed, appeared more broadly invested in Hout Bay. In essence, other VFG1 participants questioned the coherency of their embeddedness in Hout Bay as rural-village people. Yet for Lynne it had coherently, even with development, become more than a rural-village environment, it had become her home. She had creatively reinterpreted her identity and the way in which she belonged.

Underlying this discussion is that VFG1, as community members, were experiencing a group ecological identity crisis, in respect of their present experience of Hout Bay versus their desired rural-village social and ecological identity. However, this was complicated as

it can be argued that this group, which accommodated a range of social self identities, was *ecologically creative*. That is they chose who to be socially and ecologically. They chose their particular embeddedness within the environment and dynamically who they were. They had migrated, within South Africa (and Africa), in search of, or to create this desired embeddedness, their desired social and ecological rural-village relations and ultimately their desired way of knowing themselves (see earlier narratives and baseline questionnaire responses – see Section 5.2.2 and Appendix 5, Figure A5.3). In turn presentations were made by some, like Claire (Story 1a, Box 5.1), of migrating again for the same purpose, while Lynne was able to coherently accommodate the change.

b) Early definitions of environment, nature and ecology (Topic 2)

In response to the directed question (Topic 2), VFG1 defined environment as their surroundings, 'the mountains, the beach', 'nature' (Glenn: Lines 489-490), where they lived and were socially and ecologically invested in (see Glenn: Line 489; Richard: Lines 562-570). Environment was interpreted as personal and emotional, with participants concurring that it was about their existence (see Glenn: Lines 489-490). Richard (VFG1) indicated that environment was also about one's 'contribution' to the environment which could have positive or negative impacts on 'nature'. Insightfully, this formed part of his later definition of ecology which he described as referring to people's ecological relationships within the environment (see Richard: Lines 562-579).

A sense of tacit knowing regarding what environment and nature mean, appeared to challenge the presentation of succinct definitions. Moreover, partly because of group dynamics, in particular the early dominance of Richard and Lynne, definitions of nature were illusive. This may also be, in part, due to the Topic 2 request to separate out nature from the group's understanding of environment. For example: as inferred by Glenn's definition of environment, which included people and nature (see Glenn: Lines 489-490). By way of contrast or multiple meanings, Richard and Lynne presented nature as the non-

human part of the environment – ‘natural’, the ‘natural environment’ (Richard: Lines 536; 607). Nature was an,

“essence an element that exists. So there’s a flower and there’s a nest, whatever. [Deleted] That’s ah a natural, sort of developing thing. [Deleted] Without man [Deleted] Nature pre-dates man. It’s what’s there” (Richard: Lines 535-574).

There was a quality of purity and an expression of process without humans in this definition – akin to the Adam and Eve creation narrative. While Richard and Lynne acknowledged that people and nature interacted (for example, see Richard Lines 534-536) they went on to develop a narrative of nature linked to morals. In essence, nature was presented as a moral standard of ecological relations. This was evident in Richard’s construction of ecology as the ‘big picture’ (Lines 608-609) and Lynne’s construction of the ‘Law of Nature’ versus humankind (see Lines 698-766). While this construction of moral ecological relations was driven by Richard and Lynne, Lance and Claire (and at times myself) also actively, albeit non-lexically, contributed to the construction - thereby, making this in many respects, a group interpretation. Glenn tended to be a quiet participant throughout the session – similarly so in this construction. However, Glenn did note, earlier, that she did not use the term ‘ecology’ and as noted her definition of environment encompassed nature.

Ecology, the ‘big picture’ (Line 609), Richard asserted was about,

“your contribution to your environment [Deleted] [Claire: mmhm]” (Richard and Claire: Lines 530-532).

It was bigger than or beyond the ‘control’ of humans-environment and nature yet was also determined by ‘all of us’ (see Richard: Lines 548-558). Richard contended that peoples’ contributions to an ‘area’ (environment) could result in ‘degradation or improvement’ (Lines 569-570); and that it was about how people ‘managed’ or ‘mismanaged’ their environment (see Lines 575-579).

In expanding and in part reinterpreting the constructions of environment, nature and ecology, Lynne drove a construction about the 'Law of Nature' versus humankind (see Lines 698-729). Lynne asserted that humankind had 'mistaken[ly]' erred in their assumption that nature needed their 'superior minds'. Nature, Lynne, Lance and Claire co-constructed, was able to 'healthily' proceed on its own and it was humankind that caused 'great, problems' with nature. Moreover, Lynne claimed that humankind failed to 'learn, from nature', although she conceded that things were changing. Lynne and Claire co-constructed, that nature was a teacher and if humankind applied themselves and learnt from nature they would be 'more successful' than they have been working outside the 'Law of Nature'.

Although somewhat differently expressed, these narrative threads were interwoven to construct a story of moral existence, as exemplified by nature. The inference was that humans should strive to dwell *like* nature - to dwell with moral intent. Nature was presented as pure and predating humankind, as superior in existence, while humankind was viewed as ignorant in respect of being nature and tasked with being ecologically aware and responsible in their dwelling.

According to VFG1, ecology was about the interaction of humans and non-humans within the environment. In many ways this overlapped with their definition of environment. Ecological 'interaction' of 'everything' can be said to be fundamental to VFG1's perception of environment (for example, Lines: 731-737). In a continuation of the aforementioned 'Law of Nature' narrative thread, interaction, as underpinned by moral intent, was put into relational perspective by Lynne as,

"it's what you contribute to this environment because, we are all cogs in this wheel. We all have to, put in our bit" (Lynne: Lines 741-743).

Part of this construction included the presentation of 'authorities' as well as universal humankind's frailty in their social and ecological interactions, as a consequence of their 'own agenda[s]' (see Lines 747-766). The underlying premise, as implied by Lynne's frailty

argument was that humankind, and as she subsequently noted, 'liberal Whites' such as herself (see Lines 751-766), were frail in a collective social sense. This had implications for their social and ecological relations and ultimately their group social and ecological identity, such as standing together for what they valued in the environment. Lynne claimed that this frailty interfered with their ability of 'coming together', to stand up for their ecological beliefs. Shifting from a universal construction to a particular social construction, Lynne declared, after first managing what was a potentially challenging construction,

"excuse me for using this, but the Black people have got this wonderful ability that they stand together whether they're toy toying and they get their way [Deleted] and we, don't, do, that. And we have to stand together and, not, say: oh well, we'll leave it to the authorities get along and become involved [Deleted] I start with myself with liberal whites, [laughs] you know I'm one of them and we are very much well we wont get involved in this. [Deleted] and we have to get involved in this" (Lynne: Lines 751-766).

Lynne viewed, the delicately introduced, 'Black people' as having the admired capacity to 'toy toy', that is, to stand together for what they believed in, to act with moral intent. Toy-toying' is a colloquial phrase used in South Africa to refer to a type of dancing, as a show of protest. Traditionally used by Black and/or non-White people, and increasingly used by those, regardless of ethnicity, who perceive themselves as disadvantaged in some way (for an example of usage, see: Ngwenya (2011)).

Notably, Lynne identified herself as 'liberal White' (see Lines 761-762) and there was a general inference of this identity to VFG1. This dichotomy, White/Black people, arguably is the language of apartheid, where people were differentiated on the basis of ethnicity (see Chapter 1). Lynne's management of self, was socially attentive (Goffman, 1990; Scheff, 1990) in the use of such language and laughter (see Line 761) as well as her aside, 'excuse me for using this' (Line 751). The group did not challenge Lynne in respect of this contribution and Lance noted that he agreed with everything Lynne had said. At this stage of the discussion this argument regarding fragility was not fully or clearly developed. However, VFG1, as will be discussed, returns to further develop this construction later in the session.

VFG1's overall interpretation of environment as comprising themselves and nature in ecological relations is what I broadly refer to as an ecological perspective.

c) Struggling to re-define themselves as a South African community

VFG1 focused on *environmental values* (Topic 3) for most of the session. It became apparent, in these engagements, that in addition to their ecological definition of themselves and expression of their desired good life, as rural-village, two further identity constructs were in play. These were: (i) the construction of themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilful, and (ii) ecologically liberal. Although linked to the groups' earlier discussion on ecological identity, Core stories 1b and 1c (Boxes 5.2; 5.3) reveal a depth of struggle in the present day construction of themselves as a South African community, desiring a good life.

- *Story 1b: Informed dwelling and local flood risk*

Story 1b (Box 5.2) is a story about ecological risk. In their reflexive consideration of risk, VFG1 drew on their ecological knowledge and skills while also constructing such knowledge within the narrative. Their perception of risk was narratively constructed as a cascade of cause and effects, starting with the location of dams on Table Mountain. Table Mountain, in turn was said to rest on a fault line. The likely effects of an earthquake were seen as dams breaking with an ensuing flood in Hout Bay. The flood risk was understood as having human and non-human dimensions, for example human choices to construct and locate dams combined with a non-human earthquake.

This narrative connects with Topics 1, 3 and 5 (see Section 5.2.3) and links to the earlier construction of being rural-village in Hout Bay. Story 1b began with Claire's personal reiteration that the environment was deeply valued especially with regarding her relationship with horses and the open, rural experience (see Lines 1818-1826; see also Box 5.1). In the construction of being at risk from an earthquake-flood, the group presented themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilled – an inferred valued way

of being ecologically empowered in their environment. Story 1b suggests that an important group response to risk is to be ecologically knowledgeable and skilful. For example (see Story 1b, Box 5.2): Claire presented herself as someone who valued, was interested in and informed about her local environment (see Lines 1818-1822; 1832-1892). She attended a 'River Catchment Forum Meeting' and was aware that a tremor or earthquake would cause the dam, located on Table Mountain, to fail, resulting in a disastrous flood in Hout Bay, leaving residents with '10 minutes' to reach safety. Similarly, Lynne contributed her knowledge about the dam on Table Mountain, the wetlands, the 50 year flood line and flood plain; and Richard, his knowledge about the dams on Table Mountain which he claimed supplied all of Hout Bay's water. In the exchanges, there was also evidence of challenges to and legitimization of, ecological knowledge claims. Lynne challenged Richard's ecological knowledge about three dams, located on Table Mountain, questioning whether he had personally walked up there and seen this – a challenge which Claire also appeared to evaluate (see Lines 1926-1949). A further challenge occurred between Claire, Richard and Lynne, regarding whether Table Mountain sat on a fault line or was in an 'earthquake zone' (Line 1985). This resulted in new insights for some of the group about their exposure to risk.

Story 1b (Box 5.2) suggests that direct perceptual engagement within the environment, an ecological skill, is a valued and legitimate way of acquiring ecological knowledge. Examples from VFG1 included walking and directly encountering the dams on Table Mountain to verify the dams' presence and possibly even determine their role in a flood-earthquake (see Lines 1926-1939); or driving around to get a 'closer' direct look or encounter of Hout Bay to get an informed sense of the relationship between the 'wetland' and flood waters (see Lines 1896-1929).

Box 5.2: Core story 1b – Informed dwelling and local flood risk (VFG1)

Abstract

1818 Claire: the environment

1822 Claire: So that's my priority, mm

1826 Claire: [Deleted] I will move when the horses can no longer be here [laughs]

1832 Claire: [Deleted] there's a safety issue as well.

Orientation

1832 Claire:

I was in a River Catchment

1833 Forum Meeting

Complicating Action

1836 Claire: And they said: We are a disaster waiting to happen, because there's a flood

1837 that's gonna happen, they know, the dam ah

1839 Lynne: Yes, a dam

1841 Claire: It's up Table Mountain

1843 Lynne: Ja -

1845 Claire: If there's one shudder, that dam will -

1847 Lynne: and it's going to come down

1849 Claire: break

1869 Claire: It's going to come down er..Ja from this dam, in fact into our river

1873 Claire: but we'll have 10 minutes, and because of our roads, we wont be able to get

1874 out..so the people that are the safest, are high

1876 Lynne: [laughs]

1878 Claire: Yes

1890 Claire: They were saying it would flood the are all the way from the harbour there

1891 [group laugh] to Chapmans Peak. That would become the river mouth it and

1892 they said its going to happen

1894 Lynne: mm

Evaluation

1898 Richard: Just work it our ah, just have a closer look next time you drive around.

[Deleted]

1899 Lynne: mm, mm

1901 Richard: drive up and have a look down, [Deleted]

1902 look at the flood plain...

1904 Lynne: mm

1908 Claire: mm

1912 Lynne: because its wetland there

1914 Claire: Yes

1919 Lynne: It's called a: fifty year flood line

1921 [Richard talks over Lynne – unclear]

1923 Lynne: that's a temporary build because a fifty year flood plain only takes into

1924 account unnatural raining conditions not a dam breaking –

1926 Richard: Dam breaking but if you've been up there, there are three dams. [Deleted]

1927 [Deleted] 100% of Hout Bay's water –

1929 Claire: mm

1931 Richard: comes from there

1933 Lynne: That's where you've walked up there?

1935 Richard: Yes. A 100% of the water for Hout Bay comes from those three dams,
Okay

1937 Lynne: mm

1939 Claire: mm

1943 Richard: Those three dams [names three dams]. But a 100%

1947 Richard: Of this town's water comes from those dams

1949 Claire: Mm

1967 Richard: But lets say you have an unnatural storm..

1969 Claire: Ja

1971 Richard: which gets those dams full

1973 Claire: They were saying we could have –

1975 Richard: which you could have,

1977 Claire: an earthquake –

1979 Richard: very easily

1981 Claire: shudder

1983 Lance: mm

1985 Lynne: We, we're not in an earthquake zone

1987 Claire: but

1989 Richard: Ja we are

1991 [Lynne, Richard and Claire talk over each other about earthquake or not unclear]

Resolution/Coda

1997 Richard: No, Table Mountain is on a fault line

1999 [Claire and Richard unclear talk]

2001 Lynne: God and I thought I was living in a peaceful area –

2003 [Unclear group conversation]

2005	because it's a natural waterline
2007 Richard:	Table Mountain is on a fault line
2009 Claire:	mm

My terms, ecologically empowered and ecological knowledge and skills, draws on participants' earlier definitions of environment, nature and ecology, especially VFG1's notion of environment as their surroundings and concerning ecological relations (see Section 5.3.1, Part b). There was a continuation, in Story 1b (Box 5.2), of Richard and Lynne's earlier constructions of ecological relations being about the 'Law of Nature' (Lynne) versus ignorant and arrogant humankind and/or the 'big picture' (Richard). For example, Lynne spoke of 'unnatural raining conditions', presented dams as of humankind (see Lines 1923-1924) and nature as about 'wetland' and a 'natural waterline' – both were part of the environment. Lynne's construction contrasted humankind's ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay and humankind's, often ill-informed, ecological knowledge of nature. Arguably humankind was said to dwell at odds from natural existence. Interestingly, Lynne perceived ecological relations in Hout Bay as 'peaceful' rather than risky. Richard's construction of ecological relations echoed in the presentation of people being ecologically aware or informed about their surroundings and ecological relations.

The incorporation of Richard and Lynne's earlier narratives into Story 1b is one illustration, of the way, in which participants bonded to develop a group narrative. In Story 1b they effectively accommodate earlier, more social self narratives, while, further developing a group story.

Almost all VFG1 participants actively and spontaneously engaged in the construction of this narrative – suggesting an ease derived from an everyday type engagement. This was a story about the group's environmental values, about what defined them, ecologically. This story illustrates how VFG1 constructed and shared ecological knowledge about their environment, for example, through claims, contestation and legitimation processes.

Surrounded, in context, by stories of particular social self valuations, Story 1b is meaningful in that it emerged as a group construction about the Valley community's shared values, shared knowledge and a way of ecological being. It also illustrated the group's reflexive consideration of ecological knowledge and skill and underscored the value VFG1 placed on being ecologically empowered and their ability to develop this empowerment through exchange. The extent to which this leads to a shared sense of values and shared action is explored next.

- *Story 1c: Standing up for environmental values*

In Story 1c (Box 5.3), VFG1 present themselves as a community comprising bounded ecological selves or 'cocoons' (see Lines 4574; 4582-4583; 4612-4621). There was a lack of spontaneous, energetic, committed coming together as a community, to stand up for their environmental values; but where community members might attend a protest meeting and listen to someone's views (see Lines 4587-4657; 4680). This construction of themselves as a more individualistic community was narratively connected to their experience of privilege and fear, where the tendency, it was claimed, had been for social selves to focus inwards on their own security and safety, or well-being, rather than the group - to protect what they had to lose (see Lines 4680-4749). Although it is unclear as to what they specifically might have to lose, the inference was that it had to do with loss of privilege, a way of being embedded in the environment, a good or valued lifestyle - at least in significant part. Moreover, in the background of this narrative there lurked the notion of being a 'liberal White' community. An example was the tacit reference to a way of being under apartheid government with its security state character (see Chapter 1), where one would have been fearful of standing up for alternate values such as being liberal (see Lines 4728-4749). The references to being 'liberal', 'privilege' and fear of loss were slightly ambiguous and could have referred to an apartheid experience and/or a present day perception of Hout Bay - in a democratically governed South Africa.

Nevertheless the two were linked, in so far as VFG1 envisaged a threat to losing their good life, their accrued privilege, in a democratic society. The implications deeply affected them as a group, socially and ecologically such that it was thought better not to protest, better to emphasise the individual rather than community, and better to emphasise the individual rather than the broader human and non-human ecological relations.

Story 1c (Box 5.3) was constructed towards the end of the session. It was a group story about their perception, of themselves, as failing to come together as a community to stand up for their environmental values (Topic 3). Environmental values, VFG1 asserted, should be defended. This echoed VFG1's moral framing of the environment as introduced in their early definitions of environment, nature and ecology. Although not mentioned in Story 1c, this story contrasted Story 1b, in respect of the group presentation of being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled, of knowing how to be in the environment (Story 1b, Box 5.2) and, yet, not always acting accordingly (Story 1c, Box 5.3).

VFG1 participants were presented as members of a community that grew up with privilege. As such the declaration of members was that they should stand together, steadfastly protesting their environmental values (see Lines 4545; 4587-4592; 4649). The perception of being privileged drew on tacit intersubjective group knowledge, namely, that in South Africa the White community was traditionally privileged through apartheid policies and legislation. VFG1 members would have 'grown up' with this experience in South Africa. The experience of privilege was contrasted with their past fear of standing up for one's values, a fear of 'rock[ing]' the 'boat'. This constructive contribution hinted at the experience of this community, of themselves and of government, during the apartheid administrative era. There was a correlation between this construction and Lynne's early definition of ecological relations within the environment. Recalling, Lynne's construction of people engaging as 'cogs' in an ecological 'wheel', Lynne presented 'Black people' as 'toying' for their values versus 'liberal whites', in which she included herself, not wishing to

Box 5.3: Core story 1c – Standing up for environmental values (VFG1)

Orientation

M: VFG1 views of environmental responsibility (probing group discussion regarding Topic 3: Environmental values)

Complicating Action

4545 Lance: [Deleted] we should be toy-toying more

4559 Claire: We are apathetic

4561 Lynne: We are so apathetic

Evaluation

4574 Richard: [Deleted] we don't arrive in hordes

4578 Richard: we arrive as one or-

4580 [Unclear Group Discussion]

4582 Richard: [Deleted] we all live in these sort

4583 of cocoons

4587 Lance: But if we have a protest meeting, we have it sitting down in a hall, and

4588 somebody stands up to say a speech –

4590 Lynne: Ja, we do

4592 [Unclear Comments: Lynne and Richard]

4612 Glenn: We don't do enough anymore

4617 Glenn: Not as a group

4621 Glenn: Not as a group nor do individuals

4649 Lynne: There's no staying power within the people [Deleted]

4653 Lynne: You go along because it's an issue and then: Oh God, the kids have got to
go

4654 to the Dentist [Deleted]

4656 Claire: No, it's not even that, you've got to involve the Council. And good luck to

4657 whoever for getting involved –

Resolution/Coda

4680 Richard: [Deleted] you have no sense of togetherness

4728 Richard: [Deleted] Remember we've grown up in a sense of

4729 privilege here,

4733 Richard where you don't rock a boat

4737 Richard: You just take, just keep it to yourself

4749 Lynne: Perhaps we've got too much to, lose.

get involved (see Lines 751-766; Section 5.3.1, Part b). That this was revisited and a narrative constructed, at the end of the session, about their ecological engagement as a group suggests a lingering and important consideration thereof in the present and potentially in the future by VFG1. It was, in essence, risky to stand up, in the past, for their desired values and ways of engaging socially and ecologically. Ironically, at the same time, they had enjoyed the benefits of apartheid policy which they feared losing in the present circumstance - under the new democratic government (see Line 4749). The legacy of these experiences was said to impact on their present day social and ecological engagement.

In Story 1c (Box 5.3), there was also a possible remnant of Richard's earlier discourse of difference (Section 5.3.1, Part a), regarding their community and those who toy-toyed. Specifically, Richard's use of, what can be viewed as derogatory phrasing, namely, 'arrive in hordes' (Line 4574). However, Lance, Lynne, Glenn and Claire focused instead on their own constraints as a community. Story 1c's construction suggested that VFG1 was able to accommodate a participant's social self, as a discourse of difference. This might be attributable to the way in which their community was defined.

The constructive, spontaneous and fluid engagement of all five VFG1 participants, together with an evidently high degree of consensus, suggested that Story 1c was a group construction. Additionally, there was an apparent coherence, between the group's construction about the extent to which they advocated their ecological involvement, their environmental values, and their early definitions of environment and ecology (see Section 5.3.1, Part b).

5.3.2 Valley Focus Group Two (VFG2)

a) Valuing the village and/or country feeling of Hout Bay (Topic 1)

VFG2 participants opened with social self positions about their valuation of Hout Bay, see for example, Story 2a (Box 5.4). Interestingly, participants presented similar stories of the meaning of Hout Bay (see Lines 001-191). They also, for the most part, similarly referred to their previous dwelling environments as part of contextualising the meaning of Hout Bay. Together, these initial narratives, with resonant format and content, suggested this was a group narrative arising out of social group membership.

These early narratives were framed by participants' initial biographical relationship to Hout Bay (for example, see Story 2a, Box 5.4: Lines 103-104). Participants' indicated that they moved to Hout Bay either during their childhood or as a choice in adulthood. For example, Ron, Nancy and Joshua noted that they had lived in Gauteng (an inland South African Province), (see Lines 20-39; 103-110; 145-191; Section 5.2.2; Appendix 5, Figure A5).

Joshua drew further attention to his global environment experience, stating,

“I've been all over the world in certain parts of the world” (Joshua: Line 152).

Zara, a student, aged 21-29 years, who had lived elsewhere for part of her childhood, declared that even though Hout Bay was not her choice she appreciated living there (see Lines 047-061). Unlike, VFG1, almost all VFG2 participants did not indicate how long they had lived in Hout Bay for. This was possibly because it was not needed strategically, that is, in their presentation as particular ecological group. The exceptions were Ron and Joshua. Ron stated he had lived in Hout Bay for 10 or 11 years (see Line 027), and Joshua, since he was eight years old (see Lines 162-163). It was unclear as to whether participants specifically chose to live in Hout Bay because of a desired ecological embeddedness.

Nonetheless, the meaning of Hout Bay appeared to emerge through deeply meaningful social and ecological relationships. The resonant narrative of VFG2 suggested that the meaning of Hout Bay was about being defined as people of 'village' and/or 'countryside'. In Story 2a (Box 5.4), for example, Nancy narrated that the significance of Hout Bay to her, was the experience of its 'little village' character. The suggestion was that it was a valued social and ecological experience of a rural village with Nancy, for example, enjoying the sunsets over the mountains.

Particularly, Nancy's narrative inferred that it was reassuring, 'wonderful' to find that Hout Bay offered her the familiarity, of intimate village life, which she had experienced in the Transvaal (former South African Province, a core part of which is presently incorporated into the Gauteng province), where she lived before moving to Hout Bay. At a group level, Nancy's story and emphasis on village resonated very strongly with other VFG2 participants' initial constructions, of Hout Bay's:

"village feel [deleted] a nice feeling [deleted] Hout Bay because it wasn't so busy [deleted] country feeling" (Ron: Lines 022-039);

"home [deleted] sit down and just, breathe [deleted] a quiet area [deleted] close to the beach [deleted] it's beautiful" (Zara: Lines 049-65);

"village feel, like, Hout Bay has its very own identity [deleted] mountain views [deleted] ocean views [deleted] I do enjoy that" (Brandon: Lines 080-099);

and

"village feeling [deleted] the feeling is you're by the sea and it's still a village, fishing area" (Vivien: Lines 121-141).

While most participants presented Hout Bay as a desirable village-country way of being ecologically embedded, Zara and Brandon, the youngest participants, also presented a slightly different perspective. Zara, valued the peace and quietness of Hout Bay, the privacy, space to 'breathe', beaches and home qualities it afforded her - than, for example, elsewhere where she attended university (see Lines 047-074). Hout Bay was

Box 5.4: Core story 2a – A wonderful little village, a country feeling (Nancy, VFG2)

Abstract

Topic 1: The meaning of Hout Bay

Orientation

103 Nancy: Well I came from from in the Transvaal, which is also a little village. When we
104 moved down here, this was a little village. So to me it's wonderful. I mean
sitting tonight
105 and looking at the mountains how they change, from pink..different colours as
the sun
106 sets, to me that's wonderful.

Complicating Action

106 It still has that country feeling to me.

Evaluation

110 Nancy: Even though it has grown a lot since I'm moved in here,

Resolution/Coda

110 I'm very happy to live
111 here.

her sanctuary, her home. Following Zara's comments, Brandon claimed that Hout Bay was the 'best of both worlds' (see Lines 078-099). He perceived it is an unique world or as having its 'own identity' in respect of the social and ecological experience he enjoyed there. Yet, Brandon, also indicted that he appreciated the accessibility to neighbouring Cape Town (city) with its different experience. One can surmise that Brandon regarded himself as of 'both worlds' (Line 079). In some ways, Zara also inferred this, that is, being of home (Hout Bay) and of a university environment.

Brandon's alternative perspective, and to some extent Zara's, adds complexity to the interpretation that VFG2 presents itself as socially and ecologically valuing and desiring Hout Bay as a good life, as about a particularly desired ecological engagement, of being able to 'breathe' and enjoy quietness (Zara), of assimilating and being surrounded by a

valued non-human part of the environment (Zara, Brandon and Vivien), as facilitating an enjoyable experience of a human and non-human village-country environment. It reveals what was valued and also what wasn't. As elaborated upon in the next section, several participants highlight their lack of valuation of increased 'bustle' (see Ron: Lines 020-023) and development. Joshua's position is, however, somewhat complicated in respect of development in Hout Bay where he declares he is 'pro-development', but he is also unhappy about some development, preferring if Hout Bay's 'lay-out' could remain the same (see Lines 177-187).

Nancy's narrative (Story 2a, Box 5.4) alluded to the development of Hout Bay which may threaten the meaning of Hout Bay, namely, her desired ecological embeddedness, a way of being in the environment (see Lines 106; 110). This peripeteia was similarly expressed by other VFG2 participants. The exceptions were Zara and Brandon, who, possibly, because of their youth and/or presentation of being of two worlds did not feel the emotional rupture that others did regarding the changing character of Hout Bay.

Hout Bay and village-countryside although initially perceived as synonymous were not necessarily synonymous as the constructions of its changing character indicated. This change resulted in participants, re-evaluating and managing the meaning of Hout Bay and their identity, as social selves. For Joshua, Hout Bay felt like 'home' (see Line 187), that is, he interpreted and reinterpreted Hout Bay, his social and ecological relations therein, his belonging, his identity as more than village-countryside. Equally, Nancy (Story 2a, Box 5.4) appeared to remain tied to Hout Bay, 'happy' to continue living there (see lines 110-111), able to accommodate its development (see Line 110). Nancy still found identity coherency in her enjoyment of a 'country feeling' (Line 106) in Hout Bay. By way of contrast, Vivien felt that Hout Bay had lost its 'little village feeling' (Line 125). Nevertheless, Vivien inferred that she accommodated this change because in some respects she still felt that Hout Bay retained its sense of village being close to the sea, where there is fishing character and the continuation of a desirable ecological experience

(see Lines 119-141). Put another way, their presently constructed ecological identity narratives, as linked to Hout Bay, continued to be coherent.

b) Early definitions of environment, nature and ecology (Topic 2)

VFG2 defined environment as their surroundings - 'everything' (see Ron: Line 289), where they lived and were socially and ecologically invested in (see Vivien: Lines 371-373; Joshua: Lines 387-404), and what they 'see around' them (see Nancy: Line 198). Environment was emotionally interpreted throughout their their lives (see Ron: Line 288; Vivien: Lines 371-378). Additionally, Vivien highlighted the nature of people's dwelling in the environment, observing that they 'impact on everything' (see Lines 371-372).

In contrast to their definition/s of environment, defining nature proved more challenging. Nancy, for example, did not initially separate out nature from her interpretation of environment (see Lines 198-211). She subsequently described nature as, different from environment, where nature was,

"more like ah fauna and flora you know and whatever" (Nancy: Lines 202-203).

Ron, similarly, spoke of nature as 'trees' and 'forestry', and,

"all that sort of thing" (Ron: Line 244).

His subsequent contribution provided insight into the challenge of defining nature:

"In Hout Bay I think they [environment, nature and ecology] all go hand in hand [Deleted] Cos you have the environment, you have the nature, you have the mountains, the ocean and all that sort of thing. And the ecology is how everything fits together" (Ron: Lines 266-271).

The last sentence underscored the importance of how humans and non-humans fit together, how people think about these social and ecological relations – especially in respect of themselves and their surroundings – and the meaning attached to these relations. Notably, such meaning, given the character of relations whether human-human or human-non-human was dynamic, ever emergent.

There was a tacit understanding, amidst VFG2 participants, of what nature was. This was especially evidenced in Zara's definition (below), where nature was (as with VGF1) conceived as pure and untouched by humans,

"nature is anything that's natural [Deleted] [like] you find a leaf you haven't touched" (Zara: Lines 306-310).

Zara's definition of nature became a working consensus (Goffman, 1990: 21) for VFG2. It was received with relief by other group members. Ron declared that he wished he had said that to which the group responded with laughter (see Lines 316-320); and Brandon exclaimed that Zara had,

"hit the nail on the head" (Brandon: Line 345).

Ron, Zara and Joshua attempted to define ecology while others, such as, Nancy and Brandon did not, stating it wasn't a term they used. Zara and Ron similarly considered ecology to be about human and non-human interaction, of nature and environment (see Lines 266-290; 333). Ecology was viewed, by Joshua, as a 'scientific term' used by 'scientific people' (Joshua: Lines 410; 418), that is, not his term. Nevertheless, Joshua described ecology as being about 'nature conservation' and that 'kind of thing', suggesting it was about human and non-human relations (see Line 422). VFG2 presents an overriding interpretation of their being ecologically embedded in a human and non-human environment – what I refer to as an ecological perspective.

c) *Struggling to re-define themselves as a South African community*

In the aforementioned constructions participants make reference to their accommodation of their changing experience of dwelling in Hout Bay in respect of who they are and desire to be – living a good life. Part of living a good life, it emerged, was about having the right environmental values and being environmentally educated – it was about expectations of how people ecologically engaged in a 'liberal society' (Story 2b, Box 5.5: Line 2304). For much of the session including the latter part participants spoke about who they were and their environmental values, knowledge and skills. Story 2b (Box 5.5) is an exemplar of this

stream of social self and group constructions regarding identity and environmental values, knowledge and skills and their expectations of a liberal society. Examples of these constructions were discussions of overseas environment experiences, in which participants similarly underscored their appreciation of the lack of visible rubbish and/or litter there. Zara spoke of learning from her mother to recycle and knowing and valuing picking up 'litter' (see Lines 2482-2491), such that, the 'first' thing she 'noticed' in an overseas village was the absence of litter and its 'clean' appearance (see Lines 2492-2506). Brandon noticed 'little machines' (Line 2665) cleaning up the overseas streets. Joshua and Ron expressed their appreciation of a 'clean' Europe (see Lines 2532-2538). Another example was Ron's appraisal of whether paying people to pick up litter could effect desired moral, ecological behaviour (see Lines 3043- 3044). Ron declared,

"Pick up, look after your environment. It's a small rule" (Lines 3043-3044).

It emerges, as presented in Story 2b, that being White liberal in a liberal society does not mean the same, as it did in an apartheid society in terms of their group definition and dwelling practice (or desired dwelling). Presently, to be White liberal in practice requires re-definition in a manner not yet fully presented or possibly fully known at this time.

- *Story 2b: Moral and environmentally knowledgeable and skilful existence*

Story 2b (Box 5.5) is an ecological story about an everyday type experience of present day Hout Bay, namely, rainfall and pollution. It was constructed around VFG2's perception of themselves, who they were and were not, as a particular social and ecological group. Environmental values, this story inferred, were linked to being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful in the environment. This had a moral undertone, an example of which was the expectation that people should dwell in, what was perceived to be, a social and ecologically responsible manner (see Lines 2300-2301).

Box 5.5: Core story 2b – Moral and environmentally knowledgeable and skilful existence (VFG2)

Abstract

Topic Three: Environmental values

Orientation

1964 Zara: The other day we had the heavy rain,

1968 Zara: when you drove past the circle and there was just rubbish

1970 [Group: mm – affirms]

1972 Zara: everywhere.

Complicating Action

1972 Zara And you just thought well: why

1974 [Group: murmurs – affirm]

Evaluation

1976 Zara: [Deleted] You know if they don't have proper dustbins

1977 then at least once a week there's garbage trucks going up and taking...
 maybe they

1978 don't care, maybe they need to be educated on an -

1980 Joshua: Mm, And there's also degradation.

2004 Joshua: [Deleted] I'm very anti the situation we have in Hout Bay with regarding to
the 2005 squatter camp because of how it infects, not infects, affects –

2007 Zara: public

2014 Joshua: [Deleted] it's not just the squatter camp. It's everywhere else. [Deleted]

2018 Joshua: if you go to the beach [Deleted] where the toilets are, it's the same

2019 [Deleted] it's not a squatter issue. Those are outsiders and I say

2020 outsiders from Hout Bay

2034 Joshua: [Deleted] It's an environmental

2035 issue.

2037 Vivien: Yes

2045 Joshua: So for me it's not just a personal issue, it's a business issue. It affects me
2046 entirely in my life, from the environmental point of view.

2291 Zara: [Deleted] I think.. how awful it must be to live under those conditions –

2293 [Group Members: mm – affirm]

2295 Zara: with all those people. [Deleted] I think ..like you said they're not all bad

2296 people. They're all, Some of them have been educated [Deleted]

2300 Zara: If my neighbour was behaving in that way I'd go knock on his door and I'd say:

2301 excuse me, do you know what you're doing? Now why, are they not doing
that?

2304 Joshua: [Deleted] in Hout Bay, I think we're a very liberal society generally.

2305 Er When I talk about the greater Hout Bay, not squatter camps now. The
greater Hout

2306 Bay is a very liberal society in terms of their opinions, their their
behaviours. Um

2307 Sometimes it gets them into trouble –

2309 [Zara Laughs]

2311 Joshua: [Deleted] people feel nothing. Like you said, [Deleted]

2312 if you're noticing something that you don't agree with, you go next door and

2313 say: hey –

2315 Nancy: Sure

Resolution/Coda

2351 Joshua: [Deleted] when it comes to the squatter camp

2352 issue, there's this element of fear. You can't oppose it because it's not
right. Because if

2353 [Deleted] you know if we're seen to oppose it, it's you know looked

2354 down upon.

A important construction, in Story 2b, was an ecological cause and effect relationship between 'heavy rain', the Imizamo Yethu community (or 'squatter camp' - Line 2005) and/or 'outsiders from Hout Bay' (Line 2020), and the resultant risk, pollution (and/or 'environmental degradation – see Line 1980) to the Valley community and 'public'. As such, the constructed risk of pollution and its unnamed other consequences, drew on human and non-human social and ecological interaction.

In the context of this story, the reference to the 'circle' (Line 1968) is particularly significant. Hout Bay had had three newly built traffic circles (roundabouts). The circle referred to, was the one located along a pivotal public access road into and out of Hout Bay, at the junction of the Valley community residential area and the informal settlement, Imizamo Yethu (see also Chapter 1, Figure 1.1). The inference was that this circle

represented a critical junction in more than just transport terms – it was a place where these two communities' social and ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay, intersected daily.

Story 2b suggested that community ecological knowledge and skill, of being 'educated' (Line 1978), about how to manage pollution - about how to live in Hout Bay – was a moral responsibility. It was about knowing how to behave and act accordingly (see Lines 1976-1980; 2295-2301; 2311-2315); with care, the lack of which might be understood by a lack of ecological education (see Lines 1977-1978; 2311). Joshua suggested behaving without care was more than a 'squatter issue' it encompassed 'outsiders from Hout Bay' - (see Lines 2004-2005; 2014-2035). The group appeared to offer non verbal support for this assertion; and Vivien, certainly, vocally expressed her agreement (see Line 2037).

The use of the term 'squatter camp' (see Lines 2005; 2305; 2351) tacitly invokes negative notions of informal settlement, although it could also be the use of a familiar term from someone who grew up in South Africa. The lack of use of the informal settlement's name, Imizamo Yethu may also be telling in that it could suggest a lack of recognition or legitimization of this community especially as Hout Bay residents. This suggests a deep undercurrent of apartheid discourse and/or of socio-economic and ecological difference in the construction of Story 2b (Box 5.5).

A further example of some frustration with the actions of others was the construction of difference, on the basis of social and ecological identity, between the Imizamo Yethu community as not caring and/or being uneducated regarding using the 'garbage truck' facility 'once a week' versus VFG2 as being educated ecologically, being people who knew to use the garbage truck and also knew that they should oversee one another's environmentally responsible behaviour, such as, a 'neighbour' (see Lines 1976-2007; 2300-2301). Additionally, there was an emphasis on direct perceptual engagement within the environment as a means of acquiring ecological knowledge, for example, the

reference to personally driving through Hout Bay, on a rainy day, and discovering rubbish (pollution) 'everywhere' at the 'circle' (see Story 2b: Orientation). An implied expectation of moral ecological being was underscored by Zara's questioning of 'why' an ecological experience of Hout Bay should be rubbish at the circle when it rained – a view apparently shared by the group (see Line 1974).

Zara presented an interesting distinction between the moral notion of good and 'bad people' versus being 'educated'. Educated people were 'good people' (see Lines 1976-1978; 2295-2296). She inferred that some Imizamo Yethu community members were 'educated', but were constrained in their moral ecological practices by the 'awful' 'conditions' in which they lived (see Lines 2291-2296). In this way she deferred the suggestion that all Imizamo Yethu community members were ecologically immoral, were 'bad' (see Lines 2295-2296) by offering an understandable context in which they would act otherwise.

Adding a further dimension to their identity construction was the construct of being 'liberal' (see Lines 2300-2354). In Story 2b (Box 5.5) this was presented as an ecological way of being - of being in the 'greater Hout Bay' (Line 2305-2306). According to Joshua this notion was beyond group or community differences (see Lines 2304-2306). It was about the 'greater' existence as a 'liberal society' (see Lines 2304-2306). This was associated with Zara's aforementioned description of an expected standard of reciprocal moral, educated, social-ecological relations (see Lines 2300-2301). In turn, this built on the narrative complicating action and the evaluated example of care of one's rubbish (see Lines 1972-1978). Subsequently, Joshua, together with the constructive engagement of Zara (see Line 2309) and Nancy (see Line 2315), reinforced this view of ecological reciprocity of caring people (see Lines 2311-2315) – as an expression of a 'liberal society' (see Lines 2304-2306).

The notion of a 'liberal society' was heavy with shared intersubjective knowledge within the group. There was a tacit reference to being a democratic society, with broad minded and/or tolerant, 'liberal' 'opinions' (see Line 2306), rather than an apartheid society, with its known particular hegemonic opinions (see Chapter 1). For example, Joshua referred to a 'liberal society' as more than the VFG2 appraised relationship with Imizamo Yethu, inferring that it was about a 'greater' principle of societal interaction (see Lines 2304-2306).

In the context of Story 2b (Box 5.5), I argue that the notion of a liberal society was about more than social relations, social ways of being in the environment, it was about ecological relations and ways of being. Evidence for this was the ecological cause and effect relationship regarding rain, pollution and the 'public', including Hout Bay residents.

In returning the narrative to the present and completing this construction, Joshua illuminated a dilemma of being liberal (see Lines 2351-2354). In the context of Story 2b, his construction inferred that this dilemma was experienced in Hout Bay, by VFG2, and ostensibly the Valley community, in their dwelling relations with Imizamo Yethu. This dilemma was expressed as feeling fearful (See Line 2352) as social and ecological Valley (or White) liberals to have an 'opinion' about and expectations of others behaviour (see Lines 2304-2306; 2312-2315). They felt it could get them 'into trouble' (see Lines 2307-2309), and would be 'looked down upon' (Lines 2353-2354). Ironically, the inference was that they were constrained in their relations because they feared being viewed as not liberal, possibly not of South Africa's recent government's commitment to democratic principles – possibly viewed as still of apartheid.

The construction of Story 2b (Box 5.5) frequently relied on tacit meaning, drawing on an assumption of shared local knowledge in VFG2. While the group were able to agree on instances of pollution and inappropriate behaviour of others in Hout Bay, fundamentally,

these incidents served to reveal the group's dilemma of being liberal in a liberal and more democratic South African society (see Lines 2304-2354).

5.4 Comparing and contrasting key findings between Valley Focus Groups

The analysis of VFG1 and 2, revealed four key similarities between the groups, namely, their a) ecological definition of themselves as, and of, rural-village-countryside and liberal, living and pursuing a desired good life, b) tacit ways of defining environment, nature and ecology, c) presentation of themselves as ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled and d) a sense of ecological risk. While the similarities are evident, there were also subtle differences, especially concerning their definition of being liberal. These are discussed below.

Pursuing a good life as rural-village-countryside, liberal people

Both groups presented themselves as people who were similarly rural and/or village (VFG1) or village and/or countryside (VFG2). Both groups expressed a desired intimacy in social relations as implied by the term 'village' together with a desired feeling of openness and more intimate engagement in ecological relations regarding the rural and/or countryside, in contrast, to a developed, busy, less intimate human and non-human environment. It was this rural-countryside-village character/experience that they specifically valued about dwelling in Hout Bay. It was also this which reflects their way of belonging and how they desire to belong within the environment.

In both groups, the linking of biographies, participants' life stories, to Hout Bay, was also similar. This highlighted the emotional significance, of being rural-village-countryside in their identity construction. For both groups, Hout Bay was a desirable dwelling experience, a good life, especially because they regarded themselves as rural-village-countryside people. Notably, Zara and Brandon in VFG2, the youngest Valley participants, considered themselves as not having specifically chosen Hout Bay as their dwelling environment.

Nonetheless, both valued it as well as the more urban, busier environments such as nearby Cape Town (city).

Early narratives in both groups, to a lesser or greater degree, raised a shared concern as to the continued coherence of their present day dwelling experience and identity in Hout Bay. Typically, narratives raised the concern about development or progress in Hout Bay. In VFG1 this was viewed as transforming the rural, village experience. However, VFG2 still felt Hout Bay retained its charm, its village-countryside feel. This reflected a difference of emphasis between the two groups regarding the extent to which change in Hout Bay was perceived as impacting their social-ecological relations and sense of rural, intimate ecological experience.

There was some difference in views in VFG1, in response to this crisis of the experience of their environment and themselves. Claire felt that to maintain her rural ecological identity, she would need to move at some point during the transformation of Hout Bay (see Story 1a, Box 5.1). However other VFG1 participants, like VFG2 participants, were less definitive. Richard and Glenn (VFG1) specifically raised their concern as to the uncertainty surrounding the nature of their future relations in Hout Bay. On the whole VFG1 and 2 were concerned, yet did not go as far as to state they would leave Hout Bay in search of another desired good life environment –another rural-village-countryside environment. Part of the reason for this reluctance might be that some participants, such as, Lynne (VFG1) and Joshua (VFG2) had expanded their deeply emotional relationship with Hout Bay, from rural-village-countryside to that of *home*. However, VFG1 and 2 had demonstrated their capacity as individuals to be ecologically mobile, in search of a desired good life, and could potentially continue this way of being in the future.

Groups also presented themselves as liberals, specifically White and/or Valley liberals. VFG2 succinctly linked their liberal identity to the democratic government project in South Africa, as exemplified by their claims to being a part of Hout Bay's liberal society (see

Story 2b, Box 5.5). In Story 2b it was evident that liberal being, and 'dwelling for all' in the liberal society was underpinned by an expectation of social and ecological engagement as liberals; and this in turn was moral framing was linked to being 'educated' about how to dwell. VFG1 emphasised their liberal identity as a social and ecological construct (see Section 5.2.3 and Story 1c, Box 5.3). Notably they presented their dilemma of being White liberals. During apartheid rule they had been fearful of standing-up for their liberal values and as such favoured self interests above that of social community. At the same time they also socially and ecologically benefited from apartheid policies as whites. In contrast they were fearful of standing-up for their liberal values under democratic rule for fear of being regarded as not liberal, not of South Africa's democratic commitment. Nevertheless, for both groups the inference was that being part of a liberal society was a part of their presently desired good life.

Regardless of the specifics of social selves, participants, in both groups, similarly presented their ecological identities, employing a similar narrative. This suggested that they a) drew on familiar, shared, core community constructs in wider circulation, and b) attended to the expectations of an overarching narrative, namely, the presentation of being rural-village-countryside and liberal, biographical linking, and environmental valuation. In a sense this was an expression of personal commitment to a particular group which shifted initial social self narratives to that of a group narrative. Both groups did not specifically state they were members of the Valley community, but it was reasonable to conclude that this was tacitly assumed given the composition of the groups, their place of residence and the similarities of their expressed narratives.

Tacit definitions of environment, nature and ecology

Both groups tended to have similar, initially presented, notions of the meaning of environment, nature and ecology, although, as discussed in Section 5.4.2 these were often partial, ambiguous and even apparently contradictory. Additionally, several participants, in both groups, did not define or stated they did not use the term, ecology.

However, where attempts were made, their efforts to define ecology resulted in critical insights into groups' interpretation of environment and/or nature. In particular the notion that ecology was about ecological relations or engagement in the environment.

Valley groups similarly interpreted environment as their surroundings, what they saw, with an emphasis on their present local environment. However, both groups' interpretations also highlighted their perception of environment as also about their dwelling within their surroundings, where they were engaged in emotionally meaningful human and non-human relations.

Nature was defined as pure, not of humankind, a moral expression of existence. Put another way nature was described as an ultimate way of existence – a purity to which humankind should aspire. In VFG1 this was also linked to being knowledgeable and skilled regarding how to be in the environment, where nature was viewed as superior to humankind. VFG2 did not, in the initial stages of the session, go as far as to state *dwelling as nature* was something of which to aspire. However, their subsequent narratives such as Story 2b (Box 5.5), presented their expectation of dwelling in a morally 'right' versus 'wrong' way. i.e. dwelling that was respectful of human and non-human relations. Apparently contradictory, nature was also presented as part of the environment which included humankind. This might have been a consequence of the Topic 2 request for them to separate out nature from their definition of environment which was an unfamiliar practice for them.

Notably, throughout the sessions, both groups were consistent in these interpretations of nature and environment.

Being ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled

In this discussion, as elsewhere, social is regarded as human relations within their wider non-human relations. Three key narratives that were presented, namely, Story 1b and c (VFG1, Boxes 5.2; 5.3) and Story 2b (VFG2, Box 5.5) illustrate how both groups similarly

presented themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilled. Although these VFG1 constructions did not emphasise the moral frame, this was interpreted as such, drawing on their understanding of environment, nature and ecology. For example the mention of an 'unnatural storm' in Story 1b picked up on the VFG1's interpretation of what was natural, what was moral. Such a storm was interpreted as a storm more than could be managed by humankind's dams on Table Mountain, especially in the event of an earthquake. It was beyond humankind's 'frail' knowledge. In contrast VFG2, Story 2b outlined the criteria for good and bad people on the basis of their perception of people's moral ecological interaction in Hout Bay. In Story 2b this was linked to being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled – constructed as a moral responsibility. There was an inherent assumption in these VFG1 and 2 narratives of the valuation of being ecologically moral given the position from which they were constructed. This too is about how they belong within the environment. That is, on the basis of being responsible, being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful, in their ecological embeddedness and interaction with other humans and non-humans. In both groups there was also an emphasis on their direct perceptual skilled acquisition of knowledge.

A sense of ecological risk

In Story 1b and c (VFG1, Boxes 5.2; 5.3) and Story 2b (VFG2, Box 5.5) groups constructed risk as a complex interrelated cause and effect process in which humans and non-humans interacted. For example, where earthquakes and rainfall (non-human) could threaten dams (human) and where uneducated people who polluted (human) could threaten the wellbeing of humans and non-humans. Both groups also emphasised the importance, to them, of being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled, in respect of, risk. Through a process of sharing, contesting and legitimisation of technical and directly perceptually acquired knowledge, VFG1 (Story 1b) narratively demonstrated how they, as everyday community members, shared and constructed knowledge about their environment and the risks therein. VFG2 (Story 2b) tended not to contest but rather to share and co-construct knowledge about their environment. In their narration, VFG2 drew

on a) stories about their environment that appeared to be in wider circulation, b) direct perceptually acquired knowledge, and c) a shared moral ecological code of being, namely, being 'educated' about one's ecological embeddedness, on how to dwell in respect of other humans and the non-human environment.

Even though VFG1 and 2 presented themselves as ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilful they also recognised contradictions within these identity constructs, such as telling a story of risk and of being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful and yet remaining at risk. In Stories 1c (VFG1) and 2b (VFG2), both groups critically presented themselves as also not behaving according to their ecological moral intent and knowledge and skills and thereby putting themselves at risk. VFG1 was blatantly critical in their negative construction of themselves as 'apathetic', a risk *to themselves* as group. They acknowledged they failed to stand together as a group for their environmental values, unlike others, who they noted with some admiration, protested. Additionally, as discussed, both groups found themselves facing a identity dilemma as White liberals during apartheid and democratic rule. This dilemma resulted in them disadvantaging themselves in their ecological relations (including social), putting themselves at further risk, in what was already presented as an unbalanced ecological relationship between them and those who did not dwell ecologically responsibly (regardless of whether they lived or visited Hout Bay). This story of risk illuminates an everyday contradiction whereby VFG1 and 2 know themselves socially and ecologically, positively, negatively and ambivalently. It reveals contradictions in their belonging and ecological identity constructions.

5.5 Conclusion

A critical finding that emerged from the analysis of VFG1 and 2 was their interpretation of environment as more than their surroundings, as about their immersion within the environment and engagement in human and non-human relations. They did not attach meaning to their experience of the environment; rather, it was bound up, continually emerging, in dynamic ecological interaction. I have referred to this as an ecological

perspective – which encompasses social relations. Both groups also similarly defined nature as non-human and pure, contradictorily of environment and not of environment. Nature was presented, most especially by VFG1, as a moral standard of existence whereas VFG2 emphasised moral dwelling, moral ecological engagement. Regardless, both groups underscored the importance of dwelling with moral intent.

VFG1 defined themselves ecologically, as of rural and/or village. Similarly VFG2 defined themselves as of village and/or countryside. Both groups also defined themselves as ecologically liberal. These identity presentations suggested a resourcing of familiar constructions which were ostensibly in wide circulation within the Valley community. Both groups similarly expressed their rural-village-countryside and liberal identity as a dynamic product of their desired and/or valued good life experience of Hout Bay. Hout Bay viewed as a desirably open, less developed, intimate environment, comprising a liberal society. This is how they interpreted their belonging, their embeddedness in Hout Bay. Participants in both groups biographically linked themselves to Hout Bay, illustrating the importance of its meaning in their identity construction. However, their concern regarding the changing experience of Hout Bay, due to development or progress, led to uncertainty and to group members evaluating the extent to which they continued to belong to Hout Bay and/or of rural-village-countryside.

An anomaly to this identity construction and dilemma was found in VFG2, where the two 21-29 year old participants (a female and a male) presented themselves as both of peaceful countryside and of busy city life. Due to last minute attendance issues there were no participants of this age group in VFG1 so it was not possible to compare these views, but it is reasonable to assume younger age groups would be attracted to more urban environments. Both groups' liberal identity constructs were more illusive and complex. In this they found themselves, as committed (belonging), yet ironically also at odds (not belonging) with South Africa's political project of realising a democratic society – where their definition and experiences under apartheid rule persisted (see Chapter 1).

VFG1 and 2 also presented themselves as ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled, and at ecological risk. Being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled in the direct perceptual acquisition of knowledge about the environment was valued by both groups as a positive group attribute. It was viewed as fundamental to their existence, their ecological embeddedness. It was also seen as a condition of being ecologically moral, of knowing how to be and acting responsibly in ecological relationships - a condition they applied to themselves and others.

Both groups constructed risk as a phenomenon with potentially hazardous consequences to humans and non-humans. Risk was constructed as emerging from complicated cause and effect relationships involving humans and non-humans. VFG1 illustrated their knowledge and skill in directly perceptually acquiring and communicating knowledge about risk among themselves – suggestive of an everyday type of engagement. VFG2 tended to rely more on resourcing stories of risk within Hout Bay in their construction of risk. However, like VFG1, their constructions also drew on knowledge that was directly perceptually acquired.

While both groups presented themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilful they also presented themselves as putting themselves at risk in their ecological relations. For both groups this arose, in part, from their dilemma of being liberal in a 'liberal society' and yet not acting or feeling they could act as liberals because of their apartheid history. Similar tensions were apparent under apartheid rule where they were political beneficiaries with privileges in their ecological relations, yet were fearful to stand-up as a liberal community and, as such, had become focused more on self than social community. VFG1 also presented themselves as at risk because of themselves as members of humankind – where, humankind was constructed as 'fragile', arrogant and ignorant in comparison to nature, the superior way of being in the environment.

Overall, these constructions highlight the contrasting perceptions of VFG1 and 2 of themselves as positively, negatively and ambivalently attributed in respect of their ecological relations, their embeddedness within the environment.

6. Analysis of Imizamo Yethu Focus Groups

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 reports on the analysis of the two Imizamo Yethu (Xhosa) community focus groups, conducted in 2005, namely, Imizamo Yethu Focus Group One (IYFG1) and Imizamo Yethu Focus Group Two (IYFG2). Several challenges were experienced concerning the successful recruitment and attendance of Imizamo Yethu community members, especially due to land tenure sensitivities. Consequently the IYFG1 and 2 sessions were held the year after the Harbour and Valley focus groups sessions. Further details about the analysis are presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1, Chapter 4, Section 4.1 and Appendix 5. As with the preceding chapters on the focus groups, the analysis of IYFG1 and 2 explores their ecological identity constructions and their interpretations of environment.

This Chapter follows a similar layout to Chapter 4. In brief, Section 6.2 provides details of the focus groups and Section 6.3 discusses pertinent issues relating to translation. Section 6.4 presents the thematic analysis of select core narratives and excerpts, in order of construction during the session. In Section 6.5 key findings from IYFG1 and 2 are compared and contrasted. Section 6.6 concludes with a summation of key findings.

6.2 Focus group sessions

6.2.1 Recruitment and organisation

Two Imizamo Yethu focus group sessions were conducted in June 2005, at the Hout Bay Community Centre. This is a well known and familiar Hout Bay landmark. It was proposed as a venue by Carl, the key, Imizamo Yethu, recruitment informant, who assisted with recruitment. Hout Bay residents including Imizamo Yethu community members regularly participate in recreational and/or community activities at this centre.

Audio-recordings of the sessions were approximately three hours (IYFG1) and one hour (IYFG2). Although the IYFG2 session was shorter than the other focus groups' sessions all topics on the topic sheet were covered, albeit some more than others (see Section 6.2.3). As evidenced in the analysis, this group did engage, but perhaps were more constrained than the other focus groups due their capacity to converse in English and sensitivities associated with land tenure. Additionally, four Imizamo Yethu focus groups were organised in 2004. These were either not conducted or were conducted but the data could not be used due to attendance challenges. In one case, only one participant arrived and so the session was an informal interview using the topic sheet. In the other case, confirmed participants did not arrive at the taxi collection point, at the arranged time. After waiting more than 30 minutes, the one participant that had arrived resourcefully recruited her family members; and it was they who participated in a focus group session. (See also Appendix 6)

Recruitment challenges were primarily related to land tenure insecurities and tensions. In particular, those approached expressed fears that:

- their participation would jeopardise their own and their community's dwelling status in Hout Bay;
- intimidation threats, some had received, would be acted upon if they participated; and
- this research would be a repeat experience of past research conducted in their community where they felt their inputs were manipulated to support others agendas without valuable contribution back to the community.

(See also Chapter 3, Sections 3.3 and 3.5)

Tensions were heightened in 2004, as a consequence of fires which had a devastating impact on Imizamo Yethu (see Chapter 1; Appendix 1), and the pending April 2004 elections (National and provincial) where poverty, an economy for all and land tenure security were key issues (for example, see ANC, 2004).

6.2.2 Participants

There were 12 participants, six in each focus group, and me, as moderator (see also Appendix 5). Carl, who assisted with recruitment, actively participated in IYFG1 and was present in IYFG2, primarily in response to sensitivities and where necessary to assist with translation. As a consequence of the recruitment challenges, there was a bias towards female gender in IYFG1 and the young and older age groups in IYFG2.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide gender and age details using pseudonyms for participants. Participants are presented in order of their initial responses to Topics 1 (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3). As before, reporting in this Chapter is sensitive to participants’ right to confidentiality. This includes the following introduction to participants and the overview of focus groups compositions, which draws on participants’ baseline questionnaire responses and session data (see Appendix 5).

Table 6.1: Pseudonyms, gender and age of IYFG1 participants – in order of responses to Topic 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age category
Carl	Male	40-49 years
Rhonda	Female	40-49 years
Nora	Female	21-29 years
Vera	Female	30-39 years
Annah	Female	21-29 years
Gabriel	Male	50+ years

Table 6.2: Pseudonyms, gender and age of IYFG2 participants – in order of responses to Topic 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Category
Balfour	Male	21-29 years
Elizabeth	Female	50+ years
Linda	Female	40-49 years
Harriet	Female	21-29 years
Max	Male	21-29 years
Nelson	Male	50+ years

Most participants had lived in Hout Bay for between nine and 20 years. All, except Nora who was from the Western Cape, were from the Transkei/ Eastern Cape. Two participants in IYFG2 had lived in Hout Bay less than five years, and one participant, in each group, had lived there for significantly longer - between 30 and 35 years. In both groups, three participants considered themselves as squatters, of which one in IYFG2 also paid rent. A further participant in IYFG1 and two in IYFG2 rented homes, with two IYFG1 participants and one in IYFG2, owning their home. The majority of participants, in both groups, had between one and six children each. In both groups participants tended to live with numerous family members - as many as eight and nine in two instances. Such members included children and at times extended family members. In addition to family, some participants also lived with non-family members. (See also Appendix 5)

Providing further insight into their social identity, all participants, except one in IYFG2, described themselves as spiritual. Several stated that they were 'Christian'. All participants lived in Imizamo Yethu, spoke Xhosa (home language) and stated they were Xhosa - a particular Black, South African ethnic group (see Chapter 1). There were variations in participants' education and skills. An IYFG1 participant and two IYFG2 participants only attended primary school, three participants, from each group, attended secondary school, and one participant, in each group, held a secondary school leaving certificate. Two IYFG1 participants and one IYFG2 participant either held or were completing tertiary education qualifications. One IYFG2 participant did not list skills; the rest listed a variety of skills, such as, housekeeping, gardening, fishing and training. Most participants reported earning less than R12000 per annum. A participant, from each group, reported earning between R12001-R60000 per annum, and two participants, one from each group, did not disclose their earnings. Three participants, from each group were employed. Two IYFG1 participants and one IYFG2 participant were students, of which, those in IYFG1 reported doing casual work. An IYFG1 participant did not disclose work status (nor income), while the remaining two IYFG2 participants listed themselves,

respectively, as a pensioner and unemployed but interested in community volunteer work. (See also Appendix 5)

It is worthwhile recalling that Imizamo Yethu was only established in the early 1990s (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2). As such participants' baseline questionnaire responses indicate that some had lived in Hout Bay prior to the establishment of Imizamo Yethu, others early on in its establishment while others had recently settled there. Responses also indicate that these participants tended to be less socio-economically well off than participants in the other communities' focus groups. There was a livelihood vulnerability exposed by these demographics where several participants a) lived in uncertain and basic conditions as squatters, b) earned a very low income, and c) had basic education and skills. However there was also an inferred social connectivity with families living together, sometimes with extended family members and/or non-family members.

6.2.3 Flow of topics

This section briefly presents the flow of topics discussed in both focus group sessions (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1). Constructions tended to intertwine topics making it challenging to separate out specific topics. Topics 1 and 2 were directed to participants in order of their seating (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.4.3 and 3.5.2). Line referencing and duration of engagement is as reported in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.

a) Topic 1: What does it mean to you to live Hout Bay?

IYFG1 and IYFG2 initially spent approximately six minutes (Lines 001-216) and 10 minutes (Lines 002-261) respectively on this topic. In both focus groups, *environmental values* (Topic 3) and *children and the environment* (Topic 6) formed part of their initial responses. Core story 1a (IYFG1, Box 6.1) spans responses (and line numbering) to Topic 1 and 2 (see below). Core story 2a (IYFG2, Box 6.4) can be found in the aforementioned line sections for IYFG2 (initial responses to Topic 1).

b) Topic 2: Sensitisation of the terms: 'nature' and 'environment'

IYFG1 and IYFG2 spent seven minutes (Lines 216-439) and nine minutes (Lines 263-455) respectively on this topic. As noted previously, in both groups, participants' constructions of these terms were infused with *environmental values* (Topic 3) and the re-emphasis and partial reconstruction of positions presented in response to Topic 1.

c) Topics 3-6

Topics 3-6 were not directed to participants in sequence. In both groups, participants regularly waited to be invited to have their turn as opposed to spontaneously engaging in a fashion similar to natural engagement. Illustrating their active engagement throughout, participants often addressed previously presented positions and meanings. Notably, during the sessions, IYFG1 revisited Topic 1 and IYFG2 revisited Topics 1 and 2. The following summation, on a focus group basis, provides an indication of the engagement time regarding the different topics, as the sessions progressed.

IYFG1

IYFG1 spent much of the session engaging on the subject of their *environmental values* (Topic 3). They also revisited *the meaning of Hout Bay* (Topic 1) and discussed *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5) and *children and the environment* (Topic 6).

IYFG1 had a clear interpretation of who they were, their values, as Xhosas. This spanned two significant environments, namely the Transkei (or Eastern Cape as sometimes referred), where almost all participants had come from, and Hout Bay. Both were presented as deeply meaningful although with critical differences. In this discussion, *the meaning of Hout Bay, environmental values, environmental knowledge and skills and children and the environment* (Topics 1, 3, 5 and 6 respectively) were mentioned. Core story 1b (Box 6.2) is constructed during this engagement. (Overall engagement time: 69 minutes - Lines 441-1723)

Participants constructed and reconstructed stories about themselves as a group, as a Xhosa community, their *environmental values* (Topic 3) and *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5). These constructions highlighted a critical link between *environmental values* (Topic 3), *environmental knowledge and skills* (Topic 5) and the interaction with other Xhosa community members. Such constructions also underscored the importance IYFG1 placed on the direct perceptual experience of their traditional Xhosa *environment – for themselves and their children* (Topic 6). Core story 1c (Box 6.3) is constructed during this engagement. (Overall engagement time: 83 minutes - Lines 1723-3320)

As they interacted with one another in respect of these topics, a few participants mentioned their perception of *environment as spiritual* (Topic 4). Moral being in the environment and *knowing how* (Topic 5) was contrasted, yet also accommodated within the construction of Xhosa community *environmental knowledge and school education* (Topic 5). This centred on knowing how to live in the environment as Xhosas (see Lines 2004-2018). Christian, Bible stories (see Lines 1980-2022) were contrasted with Xhosa community stories told by 'elders' (see Lines 1873-1874).

The group briefly revisited *the meaning of Hout Bay* and *environmental values* (Topics 1 and 3) between Lines 3322-3591. Much of this discussion focused on expectations of human dwelling rights and dwelling morals.

Participants closed the session with a presentation of a wish list which was dominated by the desire for dignified housing as part of participants' democratic rights. This list reflected the *significance of Hout Bay* to participants (Topic 1) and their *environmental values* (Topic 3). The session had gone full circle, returning to responses initially provided to Topic 1. (Overall engagement time: six minutes - Lines 3593-3780)

Throughout the session IYFG1 presented a dilemma regarding issues about being traditional Xhosa versus Xhosa in the present day democratically governed South Africa.

Environmental values, knowledge and skills (Topics 3 and 5 respectively) dominated the IYFG2 session. For just under 10 minutes, (Lines 463 and 674) participants expanded on their *initial definitions of environment and/or nature* (Topic 2). Illustrating how these definitions were steeped in their *environmental values* (Topic 3) they contrasted two significant experiences (and context), namely, *dwelling in Hout Bay* with dwelling in the Transkei (or Eastern Cape as sometimes referred) (Topic 1). As part of the flow of topics, I directed Topic 5 to the group. In response, IYFG2 constructed a shared yet diverse, multi-dimensional presentation of themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and moral Xhosas. These constructions mentioned *environmental values, spirituality, knowledge and skills and children* (Topics 3, 4, 5 and 6 respectively). (Overall engagement time: 16 minutes - Lines 674-1165)

IYFG2 continued to speak about their *environmental values* (Topic 3) in the latter part of the session. This was especially underpinned by the disparity between their expectations and their experience of South Africa's human rights enshrined in the Constitution (1996) and democratic government - as evidenced in their daily dwelling and membership of Imizamo Yethu. Core story 2b (Box 6.5) is constructed during this engagement and closes towards the end of the session. (Overall engagement time: 25 minutes -Lines 1167-2198)

6.3 Translation

A key selection criterion was that participants were conversant in English. However, during the sessions, it emerged that there were wide variations among participants in their fluency in English. A few participants, old and young, such as Gabriel (IYFG1) and Balfour (IYFG2) switched from English to Xhosa when trying to deepen to their meaning/s. Such moments represent valuable data. I relied on a combination of my own elementary Xhosa, Carl, the respective Xhosa speaking participant and the group to oversee the quality of interpretation. At times a group would elect someone to translate. For example, after much unclear discourse and laughter, Nora (IYFG1) was initially chosen by the group to

translate Gabriel's mixed English-Xhosa response to Topic 1 (see Lines 415-419). Probing also proved effective in revealing meaning, whether from initial English and/or Xhosa responses. While any form of interpretation takes the data yet a further step away from the original meaning, this combination of interpretation checks was pragmatic and effective in ensuring *in situ* rather than *ex situ* translation.

6.4 Thematic content narrative analysis

Three core stories from IYFG1 and two from IYFG2 are presented together with additional excerpts, as examples of critical constructions by the groups. Even with the translations, the broad core elements of a story, such orientation, complicating action, evaluation and resolution/coda and additional excerpts, were evident and amenable to the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3).

Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 presents the analysis of each focus group. Each section comprises three parts beginning with *the meaning of Hout Bay* (Topic 1) followed by initial *interpretations of nature and environment* (Topic 2) and groups' further constructions of themselves in respect of the environment.

6.4.1 Imizamo Yethu Focus Group One (IYFG1)

a) *Being Xhosa and the pursuit of a good life (Topic 1)*

Participants opened the session with social self positions concerning the significance of Hout Bay (see Lines 001-214). For most, these concerned access to desired socio-economic opportunities, especially, employment and access to education (especially the opportunity to learn English). Access to medical services was also mentioned by one participant. Participants, as individuals, decided to move to Hout Bay, mostly from the Transkei, for the benefit of themselves and/or their families (see transcript and baseline questionnaire responses – see Section 6.2.2 and Appendix 5). Nevertheless, these social

self stories resonate as a *group* story about reaching for a better life, a desired good life, by relocating to Hout Bay.

Participants, with the exception of Annah, also shared an expressed appreciation of Hout Bay's perceived lack of crime, aesthetic physical beauty, quietness and proximity to the experience of the sea and mountains. Nora, valued the lifestyle she enjoyed in Hout Bay, noting that it was a 'privilege' and an 'honour' to live there (see Lines 092-097). The low crime perception of Hout Bay was ambiguous or at least conflicted. Carl, for example, after stating he valued the lack of crime in Hout Bay, later declared crime an issue. He hinted at a relationship between the increase in crime and the increase in people moving into Hout Bay (See Lines 033-043). In turn, Nora qualified her assessment of Hout Bay as a 'very beautiful place' by stating that she wasn't 'counting the crimes' (see Line 095).

These valuations appear secondary to the aforementioned socio-economic significance of Hout Bay. Nevertheless they were environmental values shared by those in IYFG1. Moreover, they highlighted Hout Bay as a particular dwelling choice as opposed to other environments of opportunity, for example, in and around Cape Town. I contend that this was an ecological choice that spanned social relations and the valued interaction with the non-human aspects of the environment – for example the quietness and mountains of Hout Bay.

An important divergence from this resonant storyline was evident in Annah's response (see Lines 112-135). Annah stated that she did not like living in Hout Bay. Instead she preferred her 'home', the 'Eastern Cape' - where she intended to return upon completion of her educational studies. Home, Annah asserted, was about being who she was, namely, culturally ('culture') 'Xhosa'. She didn't regard herself as someone from the Western Cape (the province where Hout Bay is located). However, Annah also presented herself as an 'International South African'. This seemingly contrasted her Xhosa identity construction. However, in view of the South African government's political commitment to

the recognition of all South Africans regardless of race, religion or culture (see Chapter 1), Annah's construction was coherent - she was culturally Xhosa and a South African.

In the background of these good life constructions was an unstated knowledge that these participants, as non-Whites, historically did not enjoy these opportunities or the political freedom to reach for them - to settle, for example, in Hout Bay, under apartheid rule. However, under the present democratic government such freedoms for all were politically facilitated (see Chapter 1).

Story 1a (Box 6.1) brought this initial topic round to a close. This narrative offered critical insights into the meaning of Hout Bay to IYFG1. It was constructively driven by Carl. The possibility that Carl, who assisted with recruitment, was attempting to influence the presentation of the meaning of Hout Bay to IYFG1 cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, given its consistency with participants' preceding contributions, Rhonda's active co-construction and personal understanding of the meaning of the story under construction, Annah's constructive contribution, and to a critical extent, the lack of contestation or, alternatively, the honouring (Goffman, 1990: 21) of this narrative by the group, it can be considered a group construction.

Story 1a was essentially about the contrast between a good life choice of being free within the environment and having 'everything' (Line 302) and a good life defined by easy access to 'everything' (Line 294). This choice contrasted two ways of being Xhosa namely, in the Transkei, the traditional home of the Xhosa community, and in Hout Bay. The Transkei was about 'love' (Line 241-242), 'home' (Line 298) and their 'African culture' (Line 242). It was about being Xhosa, the construction of which was deeply emotionally tied to the Transkei. To be Xhosa as well as to dwell in the Transkei was to be and experience lovely, friendly people (see Lines 243; 284-285). Part of this was about freely being within the environment, where 'everything there is free' (Line 269), such as the free access to marine resources (see Lines 273-275) on their own terms without the need for

Box 6.1: Core story 1a - Being free and the good life (IYFG1)

Abstract

Topic 1: The meaning of Hout Bay

Orientation

235 Carl: [Deleted] the environment of Hout Bay to me,

Complicating Action

235 it'sss a little bit

236 different. [Deleted] from where

237 we come from [Transkei].

239 [Gabriel makes approving non-lexical sounds in background]

Evaluation

241 Carl: Where we come from [Deleted] we love it so much. All of us, I think we

242 love it, we love it because, there is African culture wherever you go. The

243 people are so er lovely. Everything about where we came from. It's a

244 little bit different from when we came her in Cape Town but Cape Town

245 is beautiful as as we see it, especially Hout Bay. I I don't think there is a

246 place here in the Western Cape like Hout Bay [Deleted]

252 Carl: I love about here is the mountains and there's fresh air. As

253 you look around, trees all over around, it makes the part so special, it's

254 beautiful.

Resolution/Coda

268 Carl: [Deleted] the little difference from here to mmy place,

269 everything there is free.

271 Rhonda: mm

273 Carl: There is nothing that you can't have.

274 [Deleted] You just take something from the sea [Deleted]

275 all the stuff from the sea is free,

280 Carl: [Deleted] When you travel, you just walk

284 Carl: You don't take the taxi or bus [Deleted] the people are friendly,

285 [Deleted] more friendlier than the people hhhhere in town.

293 Rhonda: [Deleted] something is, different

294 here..You get everything easy, you just need the money. But at Transkei,

295 you use everything without the money. Although we work and get the

296 money, everything is going more expensive. [Deleted]
 298 Rhonda: [Deleted] at home [Deleted]
 300 Rhonda: [You] plant in garden, you eat and eeverything you get free, vegetables. And
 301 Rhonda: [Delèted] here, you get
 302 everything [Deleted]
 306 Rhonda: but we not get everything in Transkei ['at home' – Line 298]
 307 Annah: mm

money (see Lines 294-295) – and, similarly, moving about in the landscape on foot without the need for transport (see Lines 280-284). Hout Bay, was about a valued, 'special', environmental experience of being surrounded by 'mountains', 'trees' and 'fresh air' (see Lines 243-254). However, they infer that this wasn't in the same way as valued and experienced in the Transkei. In further contrast to the Transkei, Hout Bay was said to be about 'easy' access to 'everything', provided one had 'money' to facilitate such access; yet it was also where one could 'work' to earn an income (see Lines 294-296).

This presented a dilemma in pursuit of a desirable good life: namely a tension between being of the Transkei and of Hout Bay. In the Transkei they could not get 'everything' or all they desired there (see Lines 268-269; 295; 306-307). In contrast to this, 'everything' was easily accessible in Hout Bay provided that one had money (see Lines 294; 301-302). Opportunities, such as, employment and income enabled them to reach for their desired good life. But ironically the good life in Hout Bay cost more (see Lines 294-298) – a situation clearly in contrast to the 'free' human (social) and human and non-human (ecological) relations they enjoyed in the Transkei. This dilemma was essentially underpinned by differences in the way IYFG1 perceived their belonging to the Transkei and Hout Bay, differences in the character of their different good life, social and ecological relations. Clearly, money was an important part of their Hout Bay relations, what attracted them to Hout Bay and their embeddedness there. Something other than money, that associated with Xhosa community, culture, friendly relations fundamentally characterised their free dwelling in the Transkei. Ironically money was and wasn't important in their

Transkei dwelling. While the Transkei was about a good Xhosa life independent of money, they still felt the need to pursue another good life in which money was important. Despite these differences, loyalty to the Transkei and Hout Bay was expressed. There was a sense of the importance of both environments to who they were, from different yet interrelated perspectives.

b) Early definitions of environment and nature (Topic 2)

IYFG1 constructions of their ideas about the environment and nature began in their initial, Topic 1, responses. As evidenced in Story 1a (Box 6.1), these overlapped and continued in their responses to Topic 2.

In Story 1a (Box 6.1), the inference is that environment was familiarly known as what you saw as 'you look around' (Line 253). It was about what surrounded them as humans, and encompassed non-human, living and non-living, environmental entities, such as, trees and mountains (see Lines 252-253). Although suggestive of a bias towards visual interpretation of environment, Story 1a also highlighted the interpretation of environment as a sensual experience as well as an experience of engaged social and ecological dwelling. Examples were: the inference of the sensual experience of 'fresh air' (Line 252); and the valuation of a free existence within the environment (see Lines 268-307). It was also about being in the Transkei, engaging as Xhosas in friendly social and ecological relations, independent of money and being in Hout Bay as Xhosas pursuing a good life underpinned by socio-economic pursuits. Ironically both types of good life as Xhosa's were viewed as compromised.

Further evidence of this experiential interpretation is found in other participants' constructions. Nora, for example, defined the environment as an everyday 'day-to-day' (Line 349) experience of 'everything that's surrounding us' (Line 348). While, in their initial responses (see Section 6.4.1, Part a), participants revealed a shared appreciation of Hout Bay as an environment offering desired employment-income and education opportunities

and low crime surroundings. The choice to move to Hout Bay was about positioning themselves in proximity to socio-economic opportunities, optimising their reach for a desired good life. However, as evidenced in Story 1a (Box 6.1), their Xhosa home, the Transkei, also continued to be viewed as another type of good life. Gabriel's definition of environment underscored his everyday type dwelling valuation of ploughing fields (see Lines 397-427). This interpretation further presented environment as a daily experience of ecological engagement, that is, an interaction between humans and non-humans. Nora and Annah interpreted environment as an expectation of value and/or 'attitude',

"what you look forward to everyday" (Nora: Line 351);

"attitude, to do with nature. What you believe in" (Annah: Lines 374-375).

Most participants did not speak of nature nor did they define it. Annah's mention of nature, in the above quotation, suggested a tacit moral frame regarding environment, an expectation of how people should be. Adding weight to this interpretation was Annah's brief clarification that environment encompassed nature and people (see Lines 377-379).

At the end of this Topic round, Carl and Gabriel actively constructed a story about the complexity of dwelling morally as Xhosa's in their home environment, the Transkei (see Lines 464-526). This built on Annah's contribution and further developed Story 1a (Box 6.1). Xhosa people were presented as socially and ecologically moral. They were friendly, as in a cultural way of being, and were similarly respectful of one another and nature. However, because of sustenance needs they, contradictorily, acted loosely ('loose' – Line 521), immorally vandalising nature, such as, the forests.

As might be expected, neat, clear and comprehensive definitions and interpretations of environment and nature and environment were illusive. However, the evidence, thus far, suggests that the group had a deeply tacit and familiar knowledge of the meaning of environment and nature. Central to IYFG1's interpretations, of both, was the notion of

what I describe as an ecological perspective, that is, of being ecologically embedded and engaged in a human and non-human environment.

c) Struggling to retain and broaden their definition of themselves as a South African community

Initial constructions, as presented, including Story 1a (Box 6.1), suggest that IYFG1 was part of a community seeking to redefine themselves, while retaining their Xhosa identity. Story 1a illuminated a key dilemma in this respect. Stories 1b and c (Boxes 6.2; 6.3) further developed the dilemma/s IYFG1 faced as they sought to retain and broaden their Xhosa identity. *Environmental values* (Topic 3) underpinned these constructions. *Environmental knowledge and skills* and *children and the environment* (Topics 5 and 6) were also mentioned (see Section 6.2.3, Part c).

- *Story 1b: Community children are missing out on our Xhosa ways of being in the environment*

Story 1b (Box 6.2) is a group story about the perceived social and ecological risk to IYFG1, as Xhosas. As with Story 1a (Box 6.1) this story contrasted the experience of being Xhosa of the Transkei, with that of Hout Bay. In developing the notion of what it meant to be Xhosa of the Transkei, Annah, a strong advocate thereof (see Section 6.4.1, Part a), implied that when they were 'home', in the Transkei, they were subject to their 'original' community's tacitly known moral laws which were inherent in their culture. In Hout Bay, however, where people lived outside their traditional Xhosa home, they were free of their original cultural frame and could act freely, even daringly choosing to act in a manner that would be considered unacceptable at 'home' or by their culture. (See Lines 817-839)

According to Annah, a core part of being Xhosa was learning and knowing about 'nature', and about how to interact with nature in the course of dwelling. It was fundamental to

Box 6.2: Core story 1b – Community children are missing out on our Xhosa ways of being in the environment (IYFG1)

Abstract

817 Annah: [Deleted] you can't compare Hout Bay with the our original community

819 [Male participant: mm [affirmative]]

836 Annah: [Deleted] its like uBaba

[uBaba - Xhosa for 'father'; also a cultural term of respect. Refers here to Carl]

837 said its more about our

838 culture that I can answer to. I can do something that I am not doing at

839 home here. [Deleted]

843 Annah: [Deleted] [a young girl] knows nothing about nature you know [Deleted]

844 er, it doesn't mean she doesn't like it, she don't know about nature. Of

845 which she needs someone to tell her about that.

849 Annah: Cos it's very important for the young ones to know about the

850 nature.

Orientation

855 Annah: [Deleted] that time I grew up in Eastern Cape where you know

856 that you can pick things from the ground and you cannot pick that from

857 the ground.

859 [Female participant: mm [affirmative]]

861 You can use that wood stick but you cannot touch that wood stick. Those

862 are the things that I learnt. Not even from school, from the old parents.

870 Annah: and the other people tell you -

890 Annah: The things like that. And that is natural. [Deleted]

Complicating Action

893 Annah: [Deleted] not Hout Bay, with this Western Cape

897 Annah: [Deleted] the young ones,

899 [participant: mm]

906 Annah: And no one is aware that these kids are missing something.

Evaluation

925 Nora: Ja she [Annah] has a point cos like when I last went to Transkei. [Deleted]

927 the children maybe we goes to pick up the wood cos like you don't want it

928 to be heard from other people that: no I don't pick wood. So we go out

929 and pick some wood. Like they know the names of the wood, like: this is

930 the kind of a wood that doesn't like take um from the forest, it stays there

935 Nora: [Deleted] Like this plant, maybe I've never seen this

936 plant before but they say: if you touch this plant then maybe you'll have a

937 rash or something. [Deleted]

940 Annah: eh he [affirmative]

953 Nora: So I think [Deleted] a child who grew up here in

954 Cape Town

956 Carl: Ja

958 Nora: And er a child who grew up there like in Transkei -

960 [Male participant: mm]

962 Gabriel: Transkei

964: Nora: You can see the difference cos, we like who grew up here, we know like

965 things, about Cape Town [Deleted]

1023 Rhonda: Although she [Nora] say it's very good to stay in Cape Town, with our

children

1024 it's very difficult to teach our kids about our culture.

1026 [Female participant: mm [affirmative]]

1048 Rhonda: That is difficult to do [Deleted] your er chil children, going to

1049 be cheeky for you.

1054 Rhonda: Most of our

1055 children leave us [in the Transkei] at the beginning of the holiday and come

come back to

1056 Cape Town.

1058 [Female: mm]

1060 Rhonda: Everything it's changed.

1062 [Female: mm]

1064 Rhonda: And if you learn the children to er tell them er about about our culture,

1065 they don't want to understand

1066 [Participant: mm]

1073 Rhonda: And they don't think they if they go to school if if we can er learn our

1074 culture.

1091 Annah: We are the the the people who know it. There is no other tribe that can

1092 beat us.

1096 Annah: Respect for each other, respect..respect everything.

1098 Gabriel: Mm

1100 Annah: You know that you can't just ask these things.

1102 [Female: mm]
 1104 Annah: That's the way we are.
 1106 [Female: mm]
 1108 Annah: But with these..young ones growing up in the Western Cape
 1110 [Female: mmhm]
 1112 Annah: we're mixing at school
 1114 [Female: mm]
 1116 Annah: because they've got multi-racial schools where they make friendships
 1117 there.
 1120 Annah: They're learning things from the white side, learning things from the
 1121 coloured side and they mix those things and the result is going to make
 1122 things complicated to the finish.
 1124 [Group: mm]

Resolution/Coda

1270 Carl: [Deleted] our children
 1271 as we are here in Cape Town as Annah said
 1273 [Female: mm]
 1275 Carl: they m miss a lot.
 1277 Annah: they miss a lot, a lot

being ecologically empowered as Xhosa. It was about direct perceptual discovery of knowledge and skills within their traditional Xhosa environment. For example, they encountered 'wood stick[s]' (Line 861) and 'plant[s]' (see Lines 935-940); they picked them up, collected them, chose and touched them as guided by other community members including the 'old parents' (Line 862) acting, ostensibly, as community elders. Being Xhosa was about experiencing the environment and coming to know the significance of different parts of the environment through contextual social and ecological engagement. They became skilled Xhosa dwellers, knowing, for example, which wood to collect from the forest and which should remain (see Lines 925-930); and how to engage socially as Xhosas (see Lines 843-1110).

Returning to Annah's initial interpretation of nature (Section 6.4.1, Part a), the inference was also of knowing how to interact morally as humans with the non-human environment, that is, ecologically. Ecological, as previously noted, encompassed social relations; where human-human relations were a part of wider human-non-human and non-human-non-human relations. It was, Annah consistently asserted, and Gabriel appeared to confirm, about knowing to respect one another and 'everything'. The inference here was of the human and non-human environment (see Lines 1096-1098; also see Section 6.4.1, Part a; b). A young girl, presumably living in Hout Bay, was said not to know how to interact with nature, not because of a moral slight, but because of a lack of ecological knowledge and skill. This formed the crux of Story 1b, that is, where children as Xhosa community members failed to learn how to be morally and ecologically Xhosa as a consequence of their parents' (or others) pursuit of a good life outside their traditional Xhosa home, the Transkei. If one regards children as the future of their community, this failure, as a consequence of pursuing a good life, posed a serious threat.

Unsurprisingly, given that Nora was from the Western Cape (see Section 6.2.2), Nora differed slightly from this group position (see Lines 953-965). Her inference was that one could be Xhosa and ecologically knowledgeable and skilful about their particular home environment, whether Transkei or Western Cape. Nevertheless, Nora evidently supported the Xhosa experiential discovery of meaning in the traditional Xhosa environment (see Lines 925-937). This was considered a critical childhood experience (see Lines 958-965) akin to a rite of passage. This was similarly regarded by Rhonda, Annah, Carl and, possibly, a female participant who engaged non-lexically (this participant's identity could not be determined during transcription) (see Lines 843-850; 940, 1023-1074; 1108; 1270-1275). As Annah stated, and an unidentified female participant appeared to confirm, one could not simply ask for such knowledge and skills (see Lines 1100-1102).

It was ironic, as detailed in their initial narratives (Section 6.4.1, Part a), that a shared interpretation of Hout Bay's good life was the access to desired education for themselves

and/or their children, yet that education was said to complicate (or even confuse) their children's moral, ecological Xhosa identity and sense of belonging (see Lines 1108-1277). Going to school in the Western Cape was said to immerse Xhosa children in a multi-racial social environment that was critically distanced from their traditional Xhosa environment (see Lines 1108-1124). Experiential immersion in the environment, as a way of learning, was thus set against formal, institutionalised, education.

This construction also tacitly referenced the complexities of a new way of multi-racial dwelling, of belonging. Such interaction was politically prohibited under apartheid, but endorsed and politically facilitated by South Africa's recent democratic government (see Chapter 1). As such, South Africa's political democratic commitment was perceived by IYFG1 as a risk to their traditional ('original') Xhosa identity and ecological belonging and empowerment. It certainly presented uncertainties and a challenge to redefining themselves, as Xhosa and how they belonged.

- *Story 1c: As we live in Imizamo Yethu, is not who we are*

Story 1c (Box 6.3) is an intricate group narrative about being at risk as Xhosas while living in Imizamo Yethu (Hout Bay). It is about the risk, the contradictions, inherent in IYFG1's pursuit of a good, safe and healthy life, as Xhosas, in present day South Africa. This narrative was constructed late in the session. It revisited and developed participants' initial constructions (Section 6.4.1, Part a), and significant group narratives, such as, Story 1a (Box 6.1) and Story 1b (Box 6.2). As will be elaborated, Story 1c intertwined these earlier constructions of straddling two ways of existence, as Xhosas in the Transkei and in Hout Bay; where being Xhosa was presented as being ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilful. This underscores the emotional significance of the meaning of Story 1c in the construction of IYFG1's Xhosa identity and ecological belonging.

This story starts with a problem, the problem of living in Imizamo Yethu (see Line 2365). There was an immediate inference that being of Hout Bay, of pursuing a desired good life,

Box 6.3: Core story 1c - As we live in Imizamo Yethu, is not who we are (IYFG1)

Abstract

2365 Carl: Do you know the problem in in in here in Imizamo Yethu?

Orientation

2379 [Deleted] its clearly divided into, in.. seven parts.. There're
2380 some areas where there is no water; there is no, no electricity; there is
2381 nothing like at the place where we are.
2385 Carl: No water, no electricity, no ..toilets, you know. Ah Some other places,
2386 [Deleted] in Imi Imizamo Yethu there is some water, there is some,
2390 Carl: [Deleted] And the Government, it's not its its policy
2392 [Female: mmhm]
2394 to service those places. [Deleted]
2398 [Quiet background talk]

Complicating Action

2408 Carl: Very important you must know, it's money.
2412 Carl: So we are there [Hout Bay] to work. We've got our jobs here so
it's better to stay
2413 close to your work [Deleted].

Evaluation

2413 Carl That is why we
2414 are we are living under those conditions. It's not that we are happy
2416 [Group: mm]
2418 where we are living there. We are not happy and we don't like the
way
2419 we are living um living. We try by ourselves to, to make our places
better,
2427 Carl: [Deleted] life [is] difficult.
2431 Carl: We are using stoves
2435 Carl: which are causing [Deleted] the fires.
2439 Carl: Most of the time its burning here in Hout Bay -
2449 Annah: [Deleted] When it comes to, to our
2450 lives, the current issue is just that IY [Imizamo Yethu] is
overpopulated.
2454 Annah: ..We've got no money; [Deleted]

2456 Our core conditions are very bad. [Deleted]

2463 [Deleted] when it comes to to Hout Bay or up to IY the problem is

2464 just that, it isn't my house, this is my shack. It's just a shack. [Deleted]

2469 Annah: If, she [your child] made a mistake and her shack is burning, surely my one

is going

2470 to be affected.

2472 Rhonda: mm

2474 Annah: As she [Nora] said that people becoming ignorant. [Deleted]

2475 we need people to educate us. I think myself too

2476 because people they don't care. Early in the morning you can just

clean

2477 just in front of your house; a dog of of which you don't have a dog.

You

2478 [Deleted] you must pick up, nappies.. which throw away; of which you

2479 don't have a dog; you don't have a child; [Deleted]

2485 Annah: [Deleted] its quite irritating.

2495 Carl: [Deleted] on that point, it's not that, we we don't care.

2499 Carl: We care. [Deleted]

2500 If there was a facilities to support our

2501 community. Things will ah I think things will be better.

2505 Carl: But because of the lack of facilities,

2509 Carl: it makes the people not to, not to care of anything.

2513 Rhonda: Yes but we don't complain because ah.. we are not suppose to be

here in

2514 in Imizamo Yethu. I think we are how many now?

2543 Carl: quite a lot

2545 Rhonda: quite a lot

2577 Carl: Uncontrolled

2579 Rhonda: Uncontrolled

2592 Carl: I I think to me, to be to to to to to mix with the other people is not a

2593 problem.

2595 Rhonda: mm

2597 Carl: But th the only thing, un uncalled for is influx.

2601 Carl: Th that is causing a problem because, if you can see, look at the

problem,

2602 I think, I I am blaming the Government on on that because you can go
to
2603 any country
2607 Carl: and the controls of, people coming from the other countries
2609 Rhonda: Ja
2611 Carl: is under control. [Deleted]
2615 Carl: [Deleted] South Africa is er ah exaggerating
2616 [Deleted] the so-called ah ah um: being a free
2617 country,
2621 Carl: [Deleted] if somebody is coming from, Angola –
2623 Rhonda: Mm, mm
2630 Carl: and coming from anywhere, he has to produce ah papers
2632 Rhonda: Mm
2636 Carl: of how long he is going to stay here and what are you here for?
2640 Carl: [Deleted] the people [from Angola, Namibia 'whatever'] are looking
2641 for are are looking for houses, [Deleted]
2643 [Deleted] taking, advantage of, South Africans [Deleted]

Resolution/Coda

2663 Carl: [Sigh] ah, You know, the people they used to clean, by themselves
2664 around, their, yard and things. [Deleted] the thing is,
2665 knowing that they don't own this land again now,
2669 Carl: anybody can occupy these lands and if somebody is walking on the
2670 streets just throw a little paper, you you keep those papers until you
get
2671 tired of picking those papers on er of other people on the street.
2675 Carl: And when you get tired you just leave it.
2679 Carl: [Deleted] How long will they keep this up? And also.. the councils..
2680 the Government is not doing his job very well.
2693 [Vera speaking in the background in Xhosa]
2695 Rhonda: [as translated by Gabriel] it's true that we're supposed to, clean
2717 Carl: It's it's not that we are not cleaning.
2747 Carl: [Deleted] the council used to take rubbish each and every single
2748 day.

2752 Carl: [Deleted] then, they changed the date. They come once a week,
2753 maybe it comes, it comes ah in in two two weeks time.

2757 Carl:	..And er when they come, the truck, won't survive to take all the
2758	rubbish. And they're gonna come and take not many because
2759	there are too many people living here. [Deleted]

was challenged. This inference was further supported by the re-emphasis of the significance of Hout Bay to IYFG1 (Topic 1), namely, money (see Lines 2408-2413) or access to a socio-economically underpinned good life (see Section 6.4.1, Part a). The narrative orientation scoped the when, where and what of the problem, namely, that Imizamo Yethu was viewed, by IYFG1 as, a divided environment on the basis of government delivery of basic services, such as, water, sanitation and electricity. Imizamo Yethu was about different environmental dwelling experiences, ranging from poor basic dwelling conditions to better ones. The backdrop to this orientation was the tacit knowledge that such services are implicit in the South African Constitution (1996) which enshrines human rights (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). This was underscored by the disillusioned declaration that it appeared delivery of basic services was not government policy throughout Imizamo Yethu (see Lines 2390-2398).

The contrast between informally, unrecognised and formally, recognised dwelling places goes to the heart of this story, namely, the promise of the good life for all. At this point it is important to recall that Imizamo Yethu was perceived as, a) a tacit expression of being able to move about freely and make choices that weren't regulated by apartheid policy, and b) about reaching for a good life - which the orientation suggested was underpinned by expectations of basic human rights, enshrined in South Africa's Constitution (1996). Instead one learns, from Story 1c, that this promise was perceived to be compromised and, to varying degrees, unfulfilled. IYFG1 lived in Imizamo Yethu under unacceptable 'core conditions' (Line 2456; see also Lines 2413-2427).

As a consequence of such circumstances and the general difficulty experienced when dwelling in Imizamo Yethu (for example, Carl: Line 2427), IYFG1 found that they, partly,

put themselves at risk. For example, they used 'stoves', most likely involving an open flame, in an environment known for its vulnerability to fire (see Chapter 1, Sections 1.3.1; 1.3.2). The use of these stoves caused fires, a familiar hazard in Hout Bay. The inference was of knowing the ecological (including social) implications of using stoves, a basic necessity, but having to do so anyway. They also found themselves living in an 'overpopulated' environment. This, arguably, added to this ecological risk, contributing to 'bad' 'core conditions' which were fuelled by those who didn't care about the environment. This uncaring attitude was also extended to government who was seen as having failed to deliver basic services. This indicated that uncaring people and government (institution) were also perceived as placing IYFG1 at ecological risk (see Lines 2427-2643; 2679-2759).

Overpopulation was also about the everyday experience of 'uncontrolled' 'influx' of many different types of people, including those from other African countries. This was perceived as a consequence of the interpretation of freedom by South Africa's democratic government, namely, rights for all to reach for a good life, to move to environments of opportunity, including, access to housing as a basic human right as detailed in South Africa's Constitution (1996). Political principles were seen to be misinterpreted in implementation. Overpopulation was seen as a physically undesirable dwelling condition as well as producing ecological conflict. It was not about mixing with other people, but that such people were stereotypically constructed as having different ecological values and appearing ecologically 'ignorant'. For example, they did not know about a) the vulnerability of shack dwelling to fire including the impact on neighbours, or b) the moral ecological importance of caring for the environment, cleaning up one's child's nappies and cleaning up after one's dog and picking up litter. Moreover, it was also implicitly about land tenure insecurity – which references to housing, in Story 1c, tacitly touch upon (see also Chapter 1; Chapter 3; Appendix 1, 7). It was also about their delicate acknowledgement that they too, like others in Imizamo Yethu, didn't feel they legally belonged there. As such, they were reticent in their defence of themselves to myself and most likely imagined others,

especially other Hout Bay communities, and more broadly as discussed in Story 1c within their ecological relations.

These examples highlight the importance of fire, pollution and uncaring people in IYFG1's construction of ecological risk, where ecological risk was constructed as a cascade of cause and effect emerging from intricately linked human, human-non-human and non-human-non-human relations (see Lines 2413-2439; 2463-2753). Although IYFG1 defined others negatively on the basis of ecological risk they also found that under the poor dwelling circumstances of Imizamo Yethu, they were positively, negatively and ambivalently defined in terms of this risk. They too, at times, acted in ecologically ignorant and even immoral ways – to the extent that, at times, they were un-Xhosa.

Story 1c (Box 6.3) was constructively linked to stories told from the start of the session. Although driven by Carl, Annah and Rhonda, Nora (see Line 2474), Vera (see Line 2693) and Gabriel (see Line 2695) were also actively engaged in the construction of this narrative. The active involvement of all participants, even towards the end of the session, suggested the importance of this narrative, as a group story about being Xhosa, of Imizamo Yethu.

6.4.2 Imizamo Yethu Focus Group Two (IYFG2)

a) Being Xhosa and the pursuit of a good life (Topic 1)

Participants' initial responses were about the significance of Hout Bay to themselves as social selves (see Lines 002-265). For almost all participants, dwelling in Hout Bay was critically about access to desired socio-economic opportunities, especially employment and education. However, for Nelson the meaning of Hout Bay centred on his religious identity. Hout Bay was significant to him because of its development of religious cultures (see Lines 224-265). Linda also noted that she valued the aesthetic beauty of Hout Bay (see Line 104), and felt it was a good place to live with her family (see Lines 114-117;

131-132). Additionally the perceived low incidence of crime in Hout Bay was attractive to IYFG2 (see Lines 114; 140-149; 212-213), although Max felt the present day experience of increased incidence of crime was making Hout Bay not such a 'nice place' (see Lines 155-191).

According to their baseline questionnaire responses all participants were previously from the Transkei/Eastern Cape. Elizabeth and Linda also specifically noted this, in their responses during the session (see Lines 78-79 and 122). It was therefore likely that IYFG2 tacitly engaged as Xhosa's originally from the homeland: the Transkei. This information together with participants' responses to Topic 1 strongly indicates that the *group* story was about migrating to Hout Bay in search of a particular good life – one especially underpinned by access to socio-economic opportunities. Although largely unstated, their present pursuit of a good life in Hout Bay was facilitated by new political freedoms under a more democratic regime (see also Chapter 1).

- *Story 2a: Freely pursuing a good life*

Story 2a (Box 6.4) is an exemplar of the significance of Hout Bay and the interpretations of IYFG2's initial constructions. In Story 2a, Elizabeth biographically puts into perspective her 50+ year life span (see Section 6.2.2, Table 6.2). Her story highlights her main experiences of two meaningful environments, namely, moving to Hout Bay and her life before, in the Eastern Cape (see Lines 069-079). Elizabeth moved to Hout Bay from the Eastern Cape to access an 'easy' or better life for herself and her family (see Lines 069-079; 084-090; 094-096). Hout Bay was perceived as especially attractive because it offered employment and education opportunities for her family (see Lines 078; 084-086; 090; 094). Elizabeth also drew on tacit knowledge in respect of what living in South Africa, from the perspective of a non-white, was like 35 years ago (see Line 070) and more recently. For example, Elizabeth refers to her experience of a difficult life controlled by pass laws (see Lines 079-080) in contrast to an experience of a 'free' (Line 084) existence today. Pass laws refer to the apartheid government's restriction of non-Whites movement

Box 6.4: Core story 2a – Freely pursuing a good life (Elizabeth, IYFG2)

Abstract

[Topic 1: The meaning of Hout Bay]

069 Elizabeth: I love Hout Bay because, um, its easy [Deleted]

Orientation

070 Elizabeth: [Deleted] I've been here, almost 35 years

078 Elizabeth: I have a nice job; I've been working here all my life since I come here to
079 [from] the Eastern Cape..I was working here.

Complicating Action

079 Although those time it was
080 difficult because of the pass laws,

Evaluation

084 Elizabeth: but now it's better because we are free...[Deleted] my family is close to
085 school and they getting better education here in Hout Bay [Deleted] as
086 well as the way we getting paid,
090 Elizabeth: much better, than the money I was earning, in the Eastern Cape.

Resolution/Coda

094 Elizabeth: So today it's important for the family to get er er good education .. [Deleted]
095 this is a nice place, nice environment and the people here are very
096 friendly.
100 Elizabeth: So they support everything about Hout Bay.

and settlement, and, under colonial rule, were applied as early as 1809 in the Cape to the Khoikhoi people (Welsh, 2000: 107). Pass laws together with the overall apartheid policy of separate cultural development, by their nature, also impacted employment and education opportunities, and effectively the freedom to choose what defined a good life and how it could be pursued (see also Chapter 1). Elizabeth's orientation and resolution/coda reinforce the meaning of her story, namely, that Hout Bay was about the pursuit of a good life, which included, employment and education opportunities for her family and dwelling in a 'nice' environment with friendly people.

b) Early definitions of environment and nature (Topic 2)

IYFG2 defined environment as 'everything' (Line 283), 'around us' (Lines 283; 297). Environment was visually interpreted, as inferred by, for example, the reference to 'the views' (Lines 294-295) and what they saw around them (Lines 280; 297). It was also described as a direct perceptual experience of, for example, where they lived (see Line 449).

The inference was of an holistic interpretation of environment. Environment was about non-human, living and non-living, environmental entities, such as, trees, beach, buildings and mountains (see Lines 297-453). It was also about being ecologically embedded and engaged as humans as part of a social world immersed in an ecologically connected environment of human and non-humans. For example, participating with other Imizamo Yethu residents in hedge maintenance on the mountain (see Lines 330-335), and enjoying social relations with the people of Imizamo Yethu (see Lines 330-335) and the 'many kinds' of Hout Bay people (see Lines 378-381). Environment was fundamental to their pursuit of a good life (see Section 6.4.2, Part a). This was underscored by Elizabeth's comment about the ecological constraints to living a good life in the Transkei/Eastern Cape and the attraction of Hout Bay.

"It's just poverty [Deleted] we don't have things like sprinklers to water our garden so we're dependent on rain and if it doesn't rain and the fields get dry, that that means we starve. So that's why there is lots of us have left our places and come here, to look, for the green fields" (Elizabeth: Lines 501-506).

This comment also illustrates a construction of ecological relationships between people and the non-human parts of the environment, such as, gardens, water, rain and fields as well as non-human ecological processes, such as, drought. It also provides an early insight into the construction of ecological risk (see Section 6.4.2, Part c) and push/pull factors influencing migration to Hout Bay (Topic 1). Similarly, in part, Harriet spoke of people in the Hout Bay environment as having the potential to 'succeed' (see Line 386). In this respect, environment was interpreted as a key determining dynamic in which people pursued their lives.

While IYFG2 participants were evidently able to put into words the meaning of environment to them, half of them did not speak of or define nature. Of the three that did, Elizabeth ambiguously noted,

“environment where I come from” (Line 469),

which included people, fields for ploughing and cattle; and,

“nature where I come from” (Line 488),

which also included land to plough, flowers and trees. Linda ‘wasn’t sure’ (Line 362) where her definition of environment ended and that of nature began. She preferred to speak of environment and did not define nature. Max used the terms environment and nature interchangeably in his construction of environment. He thought: ‘natural’, when he thought about environment (see Lines 400-401); and defined environment as,

“nature and also the people, and one another” (Line 405).

When asked for clarification Max ambiguously declared (see Lines 409-438) that environment tended to be ‘most of all about’ trees and ‘greens; then reflectively stated that buildings like hardware stores and some big factories as well as pollution were not part of his definition of environment. This was because these were ‘not natural’.

The evidence suggests that environment was the preferred everyday expression which tacitly encompassed nature or the non-human entities and people. IYFG2’s interpretation of nature, natural and environment was ambiguous. Regardless of this ambiguity, the ecological embeddedness of people in the environment, engaged directly or indirectly in ecological relations was a central element of their interpretation of environment. This may well account, in part, for the ambiguity. Additionally, Max’s interpretation of natural and non-natural inferred a moral interpretation of nature and environment. In the above excerpts, that which was seen as negatively impacting relations in the environment was

interpreted as immoral, counter to the 'natural' way of such relations and how humans should belong within the environment.

c) Struggling to retain and broaden their definition of themselves as a South African community

Drawing on the above constructions and interpretations, it can be said that Hout Bay was a desired ecological, good life, choice. However, in one of the few group, actively, co-constructed narratives Story 2b (Box 6.5), the experience of this choice was presented as a challenge to their Xhosa identity, to who they were and how they desired to broaden their definition of themselves and their dwelling.

- *Story 2b: Dignified dwelling, pursuit of a good life and the irony of dwelling in Imizamo Yethu*

Story 2b (Box 6.5) is a story about the ecological risk to being Xhosa, that has emerged from the experience of living and pursuing a good life in Imizamo Yethu. It concerned the contradictions of i) being Xhosa with Xhosa ecological values (an interpretation of Topic 3), ii) living with non-Xhosas and those with opposing ecological values, and at times, iii) not being Xhosa, themselves, in their ecological behaviour. The narrative linked the main topic focus, environmental values (Topic 3), with the meaning of Hout Bay (Topic 1) and environmental knowledge and skills (Topic 5). It provided a deep insight into the meaning of being Xhosa and their perception of being at ecological risk as a consequence of themselves and others. From this point forward, environmental, in respect of the topics, was replaced with, ecological, in keeping with IYFG2's interpretation of environment, as for example, presented in Section 6.4.2, Part b - further noting, that this ecological interpretation encompasses social relations. This interpretation is further reinforced by Elizabeth's view that dwelling in Imizamo Yethu was about the environment, and particularly about how people ecologically engaged therein (Story 2b, Box 6.5, Lines 1960-1970).

Box 6.5: Core story 2b – Dignified dwelling, pursuit of a good life and the irony of dwelling in Imizamo Yethu (IYFG2)

Abstract

Topic 3: Environmental values

Orientation

Although narratively absent, the story is about living in Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay.

Complicating Action

1723 Max: [Deleted] I hate the feeling

1724 that there are those people who make dirty ah

1748 Harriet: [Carl translates Harriet who speaks in a mixture of English and Xhosa] What
 I hate the most in our environment, more

1749 specially where I am living, is that the people they don't take care of

1750 cleaning the streets.

1780 Linda: [Deleted] And, another is the kind of [is] music,

1790 Linda: that they play down here. You know like you sit here but still you here the
1791 music.

1795 Linda: I don't like that [Deleted]

1807 Linda: But I don't think we have the message from that music as such.

1811 Linda: Just shout the people.

1815 Linda: Ja [Yes]. Aand I don't like the... some of the people they, don't care, about
1816 cleaning,

1818 Emma: mm

Evaluation

1820 Linda: You know, like the cleaning the stuff. Like I'm going to in my place

1824 Linda: and outside is my yard for instance. [Deleted] You

1825 going to take your plastic bag that bag full of rubbish inside and throw it
1826 away.

1830 Linda: That's not good.... Because, we have some, big bin out there, we can we

1831 can put them. And then... some of the stuff like those stuff called

1832 condoms

1836 Linda: coming from the people in Imizamo

1840 Linda: they throw all the stuff... anywhere.

1844 Linda: Ja [Yes]. So the people don't care about that.

1848 Linda: But, I don't like it. That's the way where we live now. We're living with

1849 those people called.... let me say, they're refugees.

1851 [Group: mmhm]

1853 Linda: Those people don't care about any stuff.

1861 Linda: They don't care about anything

1865 Linda: but themselves. [Deleted]

1881 Linda: To me they look like they don't have that knowledge that they can clean

1882 themselves where they live,

1886 Linda: besides their bodies.

1919 Linda: [Deleted] we can teach our children. This is not right and this is not , its

1920 right.

1947 Linda: It's wrong or it's right. [Deleted]

1960 Elizabeth: mm I just want that people to try our dirty water because I mean, they

1961 wash dishes, and the drains. Instead of throwing that water right in the

1962 drains they will just throw it on the house and your house are filthy dirty,

1963 from the outside. I don't like that. And um I don't like sometimes walking

1964 to work and those er those people which are coughing and spitting

1968 Elizabeth: which is not right for the environment. It's not right for anybody. I just

1969 wish.. there will be some people that can educate people, that, how to

1970 work things out.

1980 Balfour: [Carl translates] What I don't like is noise.

1989 Balfour: [Carl translates]] [Deleted] I wish everybody can sleep at night because I

 don't like

1990 noise when I'm sleeping.

Resolution/Coda

2033 Nelson: [Carl translates] What I think... people must value themselves

2037 in order to bring, back, their dignity.

2089 Linda: Nelson Mandela, or, heaven

2091 [Laughter]

Living in Imizamo Yethu, while earlier described as being about pursuit of a good life, was, in Story 2b (Box 6.5), emotively described ('hate' – see Lines 1723; 1748) as an undesirable everyday dwelling experience, ie a not so good life. Examples included, living with people who didn't care about the environment, and being in a dirty neighbourhood

where loud music was played (see Lines 1723-1818; 1825-1840; 1960-1964; 1989-1990). This appeared to be an unexpected experience, a peripeteia, in their pursuit of a good life.

During this narrative evaluation, participants presented themselves as Xhosa, as people who morally cared about the environment and who were ecologically knowledgeable and skilful in their dwelling in the environment. They knew, and were in the process of educating their children, as to the morally right and wrong way of dwelling in the environment (see Lines 1919-1947), exemplified by cleaning their own living space and 'outside' and being socially considerate (see Lines 1820-1844; 1919-1947; 1960-1990). They perceived themselves as ecologically empowered as Xhosas yet at the same time, they noted they were increasingly disempowered through their everyday dwelling experience of Imizamo Yethu because of living with 'refugees' (Line 1849).

A key construct of this tension in their identity and belonging in Imizamo Yethu was a discourse of difference. This was presented primarily on basis of ethnicity and moral ecological existence. This discourse was apparent in challenging constructions of everyday dwelling and use of emotive language, such as, people, without personal dignity (Lines 2033-2037), who used and threw condoms 'anywhere' (Lines 1831-1840), who only cleaned their own bodies (see Lines 1881-1886), who were 'refugees' (Line 1849), and who spat and coughed in the street (see Lines 1963-1964). Such people were perceived as behaving in an uncaring ecological manner, morally lacking, and ecologically uneducated (see Lines 1723-1886; 1968-1970; 1980-1990) and were viewed as having no self pride or dignity (see Lines 2033-2037).

References to dignity (see Line 2037), 'heaven' (Line 2089) and 'Nelson Mandela' (Line 2089) are notable and suggest that this story was particularly underpinned by expectations of democratically governed South Africa. Nelson Mandela, a former anti-apartheid activist and first president of democratically governed South Africa, is symbolic of and synonymous, in South Africa, with its dawn of democratic rule. An inferred

expectation of this new South Africa was the experience of 'heaven' (Line 2089) or what can be viewed as the ultimate moral good life. The right to dignity for all is a cornerstone of South Africa's Constitution (1996). As constructed in Story 2b, dignity was about more than a fundamental human right - a social right - it was about ecological rights for all. As such, the discourse of ecological difference regarding IYFG2 centred on ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled Xhosas and ecologically immoral, uneducated and unskilled, *other*, residents of Imizamo Yethu. This has overtones of ecological vulnerability. As Linda noted (see Lines 1848-1849), and the group concurred (see Line 1851), the irony of being Xhosa, of the new South Africa, of pursuing the dream of 'Nelson Mandela, or, heaven' (Line 2089) was that they lived in a refugee environment (see Lines 1848-1851), surrounded by other people and engaged in ecological relations contrary to their Xhosa ecological being and sense of dignity.

This narrative was spontaneously constructed, piece by piece, by all IYFG2 participants – spanning much of the latter half of the session. Participants' constructions illustrated their shared understanding, as Xhosas, of the implications to their identity and belonging under apartheid and democratically governed South Africa. In addition to the group narrative elements already identified, Story 2b (Box 6.5) pulled together preceding threads of discourse characterised by more social self expressions concerning what participants valued about living in Imizamo Yethu (Topics 1 and 3). For example, Max valued the experience of walking on the beaches and in the forest (see Lines 1230-1235); Harriet enjoyed cleaning her house and, together with others, removing litter from the beaches (see Lines 1240-1275); Linda liked to clean the place where she lived 'inside and outside' as well as shopping (see Lines 1288-1292); Elizabeth liked to tidy up because she didn't like paper littering the street, as well as caring with others for the sick and old (see Lines 1475-1488); Balfour enjoyed keeping his place and the street clean and watering plants (see Lines 1494-1504); and Nelson valued cleaning his yard, and would like to plant some trees, but most importantly wanted to show people how important it was to be Christian (see Lines 1678-1711). These expressions are broadly resonant. As such they reflect a

group story of how their group is positively attributed in respect of how they dwell in the environment.

6.5 Comparing and contrasting key findings between Imizamo Yethu Focus Groups

The analysis of IYFG1 and 2, revealed four key similarities between the groups, namely, their a) ecological presentation of themselves as Xhosas, pursuing a desired good life, b) tacit ways of defining environment and nature, c) presentation of themselves as ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled and d) a sense of ecological risk. As will be discussed there were also subtle yet critical differences between the groups, especially regarding ecological risk. The following discussion ends by drawing attention to emergent themes which are then discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Xhosas, pursuing their desired good life

Both groups similarly presented themselves as Xhosas, of the traditional Xhosa community in the Transkei. In their pursuit of a desired good life, they had all chosen to migrate and settle in Imizamo Yethu. Even so in many respects, most notably cultural, Transkei remained in their interpretation as a good life. Whether dwelling in the Transkei and/or Imizamo Yethu, being Xhosa was fundamental to their identity (for example, see Stories 1c and 2b (Boxes 6.3; 6.5).

According to both groups, pursuing the good life was facilitated, to some extent, by their dwelling in Imizamo Yethu which especially gave them advantageous access to employment-income and education opportunities. It also enabled enjoyment of aesthetically pleasing dwelling surroundings and a low crime environment as well as an appreciation of activities that could be undertaken within Hout Bay, such as, walking on the beach. Notably, both groups tended to speak of Imizamo Yethu as their primary focus with a wider reference to Hout Bay. This underscores the importance in their identity construction of Imizamo Yethu in particular. While employment and education opportunities, for example, tended not to be available in Imizamo Yethu, as Balfour noted,

it was about the everyday experience of dwelling close to those opportunities (see IYFG2: Line 015-043).

All participants had left their familiar home environment for the unknown and uncertain, in the pursuit of the good life. This was an important part of the groups' identity and the ways in which they belonged in their meaningful environments, namely, the Transkei and Hout Bay. Nora (IYFG1) had also migrated albeit within the Western Cape Province. Nora also acknowledged her membership of the traditional Xhosa Transkei community (see Story 2b, Box 6.5). Participants' baseline questionnaire responses and some participants' session discourse, in both groups, indicated that all participants had moved to Hout Bay over a wide range of years. This spanned the apartheid and democratic government eras. Those participants who *resided* in Hout Bay during the apartheid era, for the most part did not live in Imizamo Yethu, as it was not established until the early 1990's. Moreover, under apartheid rule their residency and dwelling activities in a politically designated white area and a smaller Cape Coloured area (Hout Bay) would have been subject to residential and socio-economic restrictions (see Chapter 1). Insightfully, their then Hout Bay residence would have been legally regarded as temporary and their homeland regarded as their permanent residence. Even so, as discussed in Chapter 1 a small group of Blacks squatted in Hout Bay towards the end of the apartheid area. Those who moved to Hout Bay following the 1994 election of a democratic government would have enjoyed a politically facilitated choice of migration and settlement. An example of this contrasting experience was evident in Elizabeth's succinct narrative (IYFG2, Story 2a, Box 6.4). The evidence indicates that while participants shared the same ethnic background, and often the same early formative tribal homeland community environment, they were also part of a relatively new and developing Imizamo Yethu community, in particular a Xhosa community. Where Imizamo Yethu was viewed as a multicultural community, comprising many different people - see Stories 1c and 2b (Boxes 6.3; 6.5). Taking into account groups' constructions of being Xhosa and their pursuit of a desired good life by dwelling in

Imizamo Yethu, it can be argued that they also presented themselves as citizens of a multicultural, democratically governed country.

Tacit definitions of environment and nature

IYFG1 and 2 presented similar initial definitions of the meaning of environment and/or nature. Both groups expressed a preference for the term environment as opposed to nature. Even so these were partial and sometimes ambiguous and contradictory. Environment was defined as their surroundings and what they saw. It was also defined through the course of their existence within the environment, their sensual and emotive activity, expectation and experience, of the human and non-human environment. These groups perceived themselves to be ecologically immersed and engaged in the environment as Xhosas.

Most participants in both groups did not define nature nor use the term. When defined and/or used there was a sense of ambiguity, or at least blurred overlap, between their interpretations of environment and that of nature. IYFG1, however, did present a strong moral interpretation of nature underpinned by a perceived duty of care or respect. This was constructed as fundamental to how they engaged socially and ecologically as Xhosas. This moral frame was less evident (initially) in IYFG2 largely because only a few participants defined nature – and those that did, were focused on their struggle to distinctly define nature from their definition of environment. However Max (IYFG2) did present a moral interpretation of environment, namely, that negatively impacting relations within the environment were immoral, counter to the natural way of existing.

Being ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled as Xhosas

IYFG1 and 2 similarly presented themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilled. See, for example, IYFG1, Stories 1b and c (Boxes 6.2; 6.3) and IYFG2, Story 2b (Box 6.5). These stories had a definitive moral frame regarding how they and others should live in the environment, including the basis for ecological relationships. This encompassed

social relations; where social relations were interpreted as a part of how individuals and groups engaged within their wider ecological embeddedness. This construction was built on their primary identity construction of themselves as Xhosas. In other words, they as Xhosa's were ecologically moral and knew and were skilled in how to dwell in the environment. Notably there was a link between ecological moral being and knowledge and skill which suggests an expectation of moral being which was to be ecologically knowledgeable and skilled.

In identifying the source of their moral framework, IYFG1 (see Story 1b, Box 6.2) participants emphasised their traditional Xhosa identity. This was about a particular way of dwelling within the environment, as learnt, during childhood, through the direct perceptual experience of their traditional Xhosa community home, the Transkei, surrounded and supported by Xhosa community members. Although IYFG2 presented their experience of learning and becoming skilled in their dwelling, these were on a more social self basis rather than a group narrative. For example, experiences varied from learning as a child, discovering the meaning of the environment in a similar fashion to that mentioned by IYFG1, to formal school education, older life experience and biblical principles (see Section 6.2.3). Nevertheless, both groups (see IYFG1, Story 1c, Box 6.3 and IYFG2, Story 2b, Box 6.5) illustrated the importance to who they were, of their everyday practice of their ecological knowledge and skills, in the ecologically moral way in which they dwelt in Imizamo Yethu. This also had significance, as will be discussed under ecological risk, regarding the way they came to know Imizamo Yethu, including others that lived there.

A sense of ecological risk

Both groups constructed risk as an ecological phenomenon. This risk was perceived as emerging from interconnected, cause and effect sequences within their ecological, including social, dwelling relations within the environment. Their pursuit of a good life was a critical example of their construction of ecological risk bringing a contrast to their presentation of themselves as ecologically empowered, as Xhosas, through their

ecological morals, knowledge and skills. Risk centred on being ecologically disempowered or vulnerable in their sense of belonging to meaningful environments.

From the start of the session, IYFG1 (Story 1a, Box 6.1) constructed a dilemma of reaching for a good life. This dilemma concerned their belonging as Xhosas, in the Transkei and in Hout Bay (Imizamo Yethu), where they experienced two different ways of being free in South Africa and, in turn, two different ways of knowing themselves. In the Transkei they were free, surrounded by friendly people, unimpeded by financial and other restrictions, to reach for almost anything they wanted - human and non-human. Ironically, they realised that they could not get everything they wanted there. In Hout Bay they felt that they could get everything for a price, and earn a favourable income with which to facilitate their realisation of a good life. Ironically, they learnt that costs were ever escalating, positioning them further away from their good life. IYFG2 did not initially focus on the ecological risk inherent in their pursuit of a good life in Hout Bay. However, in defining environment (Topic 2), the presented extract of Elizabeth's interpretation of environment as concerning ecological relations did highlight this risk, specifically, the ecological risk of poverty to them as they dwelt in the Transkei, as a consequence of human and non-human cultivation-sustenance relations (see IYFG2, Section 6.4.2, Part b). These constructions highlight the perceived risk to their identity and belonging as Xhosas that emerged from a) their pursuit of a good life in Hout Bay (IYFG1) and/or b) their dwelling in the Transkei, their traditional Xhosa community home (IYFG1 and IYFG2).

This narrative of ecological risk was further developed by IYFG1 in Stories 1b and c (Boxes 6.2; 6.3) and a similar narrative by IYFG2 in Story 2b (Box 6.5). In these narratives, both groups described their feeling of vulnerability as a consequence of their dwelling experience in Imizamo Yethu. Both groups felt their Xhosa ways of belonging were at risk, including that of their wellbeing and the wellbeing of non-humans, because of Imizamo Yethu's unclean environment. This was perceived to be a consequence of other

Imizamo Yethu residents' ecologically immoral and/or uneducated behaviour. IYFG1 also identified the present day government's lack in delivering a basic refuse collection service, as ecologically immoral and/or uneducated behaviour. These stories presented risk as more than a social phenomena, it was an ecological phenomena emerging from activity within human and human-non-human relations.

As a consequence, both groups also felt that their Xhosa identity was threatened by their experience of Imizamo Yethu. They similarly declared that, ironically, they were of and yet were not of Imizamo Yethu - see IYFG1, Story 1c (Box 6.3) and IYFG2, Story 2b (Box 6.5). Interpreting dwelling in Imizamo Yethu as an expression of the political freedoms for all (different kinds of people) to pursue their desired good life, it is argued that IYFG1 and 2 perceived South Africa's democratic government's interpretation of and delivery on the principles detailed in South Africa's Constitution (1996), as a fundamental part of the everyday ecological risk to their Xhosa identity and ways of belonging.

IYFG1 also constructed risk as inherent within their Xhosa community relations and ways of being in their pursuit of their good life. In Story 1b (Box 6.2), IYFG1, emotively narrated that living in Imizamo Yethu had distanced their community children from critical, early formative learning experiences of and in their traditional Xhosa home environment. They presented the irony that they had moved to Imizamo Yethu to realise a good life for themselves and/or their children, especially, the access to a desirable education, and yet their children were distanced from core Xhosa identity experiences. Moreover, in place of this important experience, their community children were learning about the environment from the desired, yet undesired, formal education context (school) with its multicultural (multi-racial) student composition. Instead of becoming ecologically Xhosa they were becoming confused about who they were. This risk was as much about the loss of traditional learning and the advancement of formal education as it was about the new political landscape of South Africa. Ultimately this risk was about the future of their Xhosa community as traditionally ecologically defined.

This dilemma of identity was similarly presented in Story 1c (Box 6.3), where IYFG1, found that they, at times, behaved in an ecologically un-Xhosa, immoral, uneducated manner, because of the dire ecological circumstances they experienced in Imizamo Yethu. Much of IYFG2's Story 2b (Box 6.5) resonated with IYFG1's Story1c (Box 6.3), suggesting a resourcing of a narrative in wider circulation within their community. However, IYFG2 did not go as far as IYFG1, in respect of, finding themselves wanting (at risk) regarding their ecological dwelling behaviour in Imizamo Yethu.

In these constructions, IYFG1 and 2, present stereotypical ways of knowing and defining themselves and others – humans and non-humans. Sameness and otherness was defined on the basis of what they regarded as ecologically moral, from a Xhosa perspective, which included behaving in an ecologically knowledgeable and skilful manner. Both groups attributed themselves positively as Xhosas in an ecologically moral respect; and attributed others, especially those living in Imizamo Yethu, negatively. However, IYFG1, upon reflection, also found themselves in everyday dwelling practice to act ecologically immorally and, in their terms, uneducated fashion at times. This was managed by the group drawing attention to the extreme circumstances under which this occurred. While IYFG2 did not present themselves negatively they did raise their sense of uncertainty, of incompatibility, between their Xhosa being and belonging and their ecologically negative experience of Imizamo Yethu.

This discussion of risk highlights a complexity, inherent in ecologically being Xhosa and belonging as Xhosas in present day South Africa with its dramatically altered political landscape.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored ecological identity constructions of the Imizamo Yethu (Xhosa) community in Hout Bay. Recruitment was problematic and linked to sensitivities about land tenure which had some bearing on group composition. Even though discussion

appeared open, exposing such sensitivities the depths of participants' distrust of the research context, including myself and their constraint in discussion is unknown. Some translation issues were evident, but these were managed by drawing on the skills of the group.

A critical finding that emerged from the analysis of IYFG1 and 2 were the groups' interpretation of environment as their surroundings and what they visually perceived as well as a sensual and emotive, ecological engagement and experience; where they were immersed in the environment as Xhosas. The meaning of the environment was dynamic, emerging through ecological engagement and experience – encompassing social relations. Both groups tended not to define or use the term nature. In the rare circumstance that it was defined and/or used in both groups, it was within an inferred moral frame regarding the environment and how people should dwell therein. I have referred to this as their moral ecological perspective.

The core identity presented by both groups was of being Xhosa. This was ecologically constructed together with core constructs of being ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled. They also presented themselves as being of democratically governed South Africa, enjoying the present day political freedom to pursue a desired good life. Central to realising this good life was the optimisation of their access to and benefit of employment-income and education for themselves and their families, especially their children (the future of their community). Their migration to, and dwelling in, Imizamo Yethu was about their pursuit of their good life. However, the Transkei, as interpreted as their traditional Xhosa community home, was also presented, for the most part, as a valued good life – a valuation which persisted despite their dwelling in Imizamo Yethu. As illustrated by IYFG1 in particular, this valuation wasn't about remembering a past way of being and belonging, it had *present* day value to them as a Xhosa community to their ecological identity and dwelling practice. In effect, both the Transkei and Imizamo Yethu (Hout Bay) were

presented as deeply meaningful environments to groups as Xhosas and as citizens of the new South Africa.

Interestingly, both groups focused their constructions on Imizamo Yethu, where they lived, with broad references to Hout Bay. This suggests particular emotional importance was invested in Imizamo Yethu, rather than Hout Bay, as part of their identity construction and their belonging. Furthermore, both groups comprised participants who had lived in Hout Bay for more than 30 years, whereas some had arrived as recently as a year ago. References to Imizamo Yethu as experiencing 'uncontrolled' 'influx' (see IYFG1, Story 1c, Box 6.3) of different people including themselves, and of living with different people (see IYFG2, Story 2b, Box 6.5) suggests that the Imizamo Yethu community is dynamic in terms of their social and ecological relations. The attraction of access to resources with which to realise a good life was shared by all - whether originally connected to Imizamo Yethu or elsewhere and under different political and socio-economic conditions in Hout Bay.

For both groups, identity was based on being ecologically Xhosa and belonging as Xhosa engaging with moral intent in their social and ecological relations regardless of where they dwelt. However their own sense of identity was challenged by their pursuit of a good life, in the Transkei and Imizamo Yethu because of their perceived vulnerability to ecological risk. They perceived their identity and belonging, that is, how they were significantly ecologically embedded within particular environments, to be at risk because of hazardous interconnected webs of cause and effect at play in human and human and non-human, relations. On a human basis, this risk was inherent in everyday dwelling tensions between themselves, constructed as positively attributed as ecologically moral Xhosas, and the negative ecologically moral attribution of others (IYFG1 and 2), including the democratic government and arguably the social bias of the Constitution (1996) - see IYFG1, Stories 1b and c (Boxes 6.2; 6.3). Notably both groups' constructions inferred an ecological interpretation of the Constitution (1996) and their hopes for a good life.

Even so, IYFG1 also reflexively considered themselves as ecologically negatively attributed, at times, under very different circumstances to their familiar Xhosa experience, in respect of how they dwelt, their practices in Imizamo Yethu and the experiences of their children in formal education at multicultural schools. IYFG1 were more explicit and IYFG2 less explicit (possibly due to the nature of group dynamics and the constructive process) in their construction of the threat of losing who they were and how they ecologically belonged as a traditional Xhosa community. Part of this involved being disillusioned with critical aspects of their dreams, or expectations of democratically governed South Africa.

7. Group ecological identity: complexity of definitions and the pursuit of a good life in present day South Africa

7.1 Introduction

The central research question of this thesis is: how are groups' ecological identities constructed? (Chapter 2). The findings of the analysis of the Harbour (HFG1 and 2), Valley (VFG1 and 2) and Imizamo Yethu (IYFG1 and 2) community focus groups were presented in Chapters 4-6 respectively. Within each of these chapters, an initial comparison and contrast of the pairs of focus groups was presented. However to explore the research questions more fully, the findings across all six groups are now compared and contrasted. The aim of this chapter is to move the analysis up a level, away from the specific details of any one community focus group, to enable a thematic focus on identity.

Section 7.2 focuses on comparisons and contrasts across all six groups in respect of the emergent key themes. Section 7.3 discusses the findings in relation to the literature and the research questions. In Sections 7.2 and 7.3 links to the rich data presented in Chapters 4-6 are provided by references to Chapters and Sections and/or Core Story Boxes. Additionally Section 7.3 contains cross references to parts of Section 7.2. This Chapter concludes with a summation of key findings (Section 7.4).

7.2 Comparing and contrasting key emergent themes

Six key themes emerge from the analysis of the three communities' focus groups', and are discussed in this Section, namely, (a) tacit definitions of environment and nature (and ecology), (b) shared early formative environment, (c) being of a particular ecological group or community, (d) being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful, (e) pursuit of a good life, and (f) a sense of ecological risk. These themes are grounded in the reported evidence in Chapters 4-6. Almost all themes emerged in the analysis of each focus group. However, the theme: early formative environment was notably absent from the Valley groups on a group basis (as opposed to social self). Nevertheless, this in itself is an important finding

and a noticeable difference between groups. Moreover, some themes were interpreted differently by different groups, in respect of their construction of ecological identity. These similarities and variances offered critical insights which are explored in what follows.

7.2.1 Tacit definitions of environment and nature (and ecology)

This Section discusses all six groups' interpretations of environment and nature, as well as both Valley groups' interpretations of ecology. This discussion is critical because it informs the wider discussion of identity and environment on the basis of groups' interpretations of environment, nature and ecology. These interpretations provide fundamental insights into how groups consider themselves to belong within the environment and the meanings that transform environments into places of significance.

Environment

All groups' constructions of environment were strikingly similar. Environment was interpreted as their surroundings, everything, human and non-human, that they observed around them. There was a visual interpretive emphasis in these initial constructions. Significantly, groups' interpretation of environment centred themselves, as humans, within the environment. They were embedded within the environment, observing from within, rather than from the outside looking in. This was a fundamental expression of their ecological identity as a central premise underpinning constructions of their *belonging* to the environment. Subsequently, more nuanced aspects of belonging were constructed.

Environment was also more than a visual interpretation; it was about an engaged everyday dwelling experience that was personal, social and emotive. Their definitions, as presented in Chapters 4-6, spoke about being socially engaged with others and ecologically engaged with the non-human, 'natural' part of the environment in the course of their everyday existence. According to these definitions, this engagement was about people, their non-human surroundings and their activity; people's 'living space' (HFG2, Abe: Line 112); people's involvement (HFG1 and 2) or ecological interaction (VFG1 and 2)

with humans and non-human environmental entities. Both Imizamo Yethu groups also drew attention to environment as an everyday direct perceptual interpretation. It was an interpretation inherent in smelling 'fresh air' (IYFG1, Chapter 6, Box 6.1: Line 252), cleaning their surroundings and cutting hedges (IYFG2, see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2, Part b). The inference was that belonging emerged in the activity of daily dwelling practice within the environment – continuously interpreted and reinterpreted. This was about how social selves and groups defined themselves and dwelt and vice versa; it was about what made environment a meaningful place.

All groups' definitions underscored an emphasis on their present dwelling environment. However, two HFG1 participants, Debbie and Jack, also drew attention to their interpretation of environment as more than the environment/s that they knew more intimately and regularly; it also referred to, for example, the 'whole planet' (HFG1, Debbie: Line 455). This interpretation suggests that these participants were also considerate of the environment on a global scale – even though, for both, the local environment was more significant. Notably, Debbie (HFG1) explained that her widening consideration of environment was a consequence of her education and the political change in South Africa to a democratic government, allowing her to broaden the social, physical and ecological boundaries of her local, meaningful, environment (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1, Part b).

Although not a global interpretation of environment, IYFG1 and 2's responses to Topic 1 and 2, indicated their investment in two different, yet deeply meaningful, environments, namely, the Transkei/Eastern Cape and Hout Bay (Western Cape). This revealed an interpretation of environment as being about ecological interaction and social choices. Such an interpretation was about their Xhosa ways of being of the environment and within the environment, where social relations were about friendliness or respect and where ecological relations encompassed their social and wider human and non-human relationships. Examples included their feeling of freedom and/or constraint in those relationships to take what they wanted from the sea (Box 6.1 – IYFG1), to move about

within the environment and choosing to settle for socio-economic opportunities (IYFG1, Box 6.1, IYFG2, Box 6.4), and in the experience of 'poverty' (IYFG2, Elizabeth: Line 498) – as a consequence of their relationships with their crops, fields and rainfall. (See Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, Parts a, b)

Environment was also about attitudes and expectations. This was expressed by both Harbour groups in their definition of nature, which was almost inseparable from that of environment. In this interpretation, it was about an attitude of being involved in a caring, moral manner within their social and ecological relations. For both Imizamo Yethu groups it was about expectations regarding their good life aspirations. Notably, for Annah (IYFG1) environment was about attitude and beliefs regarding nature (see Lines 374-375).

Nature

Nature, as the non-human, natural, part of the environment was a familiar definition that resonated across the six focus groups. Nevertheless, all groups preferred to speak of environment rather than nature. They also struggled to define nature separately from their definition of environment. This may have been a consequence of the topic request, namely, to define these concepts separately; when in their everyday dwelling this was atypical, given that such meanings were tacit and inherent. Many participants in the groups did not define nature and/or of the few that did, few defined it as distinct from environment. Nature was, for example, interpreted as everything, as with environment (see HFG1, Jack: Lines 1197-1202). It was presented as being a part of environmental relations, going 'hand in hand' with environment (see HFG2, Abe: Line 152). Similarly ecology (see VFG1 and 2) was viewed as concerning environmental relations. Nature and environment were part of who one was and where one came from (see IYFG2, Elizabeth: Lines 466 and 485).

Definitions of nature also illuminated a critical interpretation, namely nature as not of humankind; a significant part of which concerned the notion of purity and a requirement

for a moral standard of being in and of environment to uphold that purity. Julia and Matt, in HFG1, and HFG2, felt that people had a moral duty to care responsibly for nature, to be involved with nature as a way of being in and of the environment (Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1, Part b; 4.4.2, Part b). In contrast, VFG2 tended not to define nature beyond a moral inference of nature as pure, and that not of humankind. Similarly, IYFG1 and 2 tended not to define nature. However, as with HFG1 and IYFG2 in particular, there were some exceptions in IYFG1 which imparted a moral frame, namely, a) Annah's inference of environment as an attitude towards nature and about belief (Section 7.2.1), and b) Carl and Gabriel's narration of their traditional Xhosa community in the Transkei/Eastern Cape being immoral in their relations with nature, out of basic necessity (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Part b). Of the three IYFG2 participants who attempted to define nature, Elizabeth and Linda declared that they were of nature and environment. It is possible that a moral frame was inherent in their construction of themselves, in so far as to be Xhosa was to be inherently ecologically moral (including socially so). Max, however, was the only IYFG2 participant to present a tangible moral frame in respect of nature and environment, where unnatural entities and activities, such as factories and pollution, were considered at moral odds with natural existence within the environment (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2, Part b).

The only group to develop a more comprehensive moral argument in respect of nature and environment was VFG1 (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Parts a, b; Section 5.3.2, Part b). This was possibly attributed the early session dominance of Richard and Lynne and their interpretations - although almost all VFG1 participants were active co-constructors in this construction. VFG1 felt that nature was a pure backdrop to environment governed by moral natural law. This interpretation overlapped with their definition of ecology. In this respect, VFG1 and 2 were similar. Essentially, according to VFG1, the 'law of nature' or nature was perceived as morally and knowledgeably superior to humankind's law and knowledge of existence within the environment. Thus, people should aspire to nature. By way of their interpretation of ecology, they should, as with the Harbour groups, be

responsible for (or at least aware of) the consequences of their interactions in the environment, within their ecological relations.

Ecology

As noted by several participants in VFG1 and 2, ecology was not a term they would use nor define. Almost all VFG1 participants, except one participant (Glenn), did however co-construct a group interpretation of ecology. The VFG2 interpretation was less detailed and only involved half of the group, namely, participants: Zara, Ron and Joshua. On this group basis, VFG1 and 2, defined ecology as about the social and natural world and the relations between them. VFG1, however, emphasised the moral frame in these relations, noting that it was about responsible awareness and knowledgeable interaction, where nature was the standard. Ecology was interpreted as a relational dynamic between humans and non-humans, a dynamic in which people were viewed as having or needing to be ecologically moral (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Parts a, b; Section 5.3.2, Part a).

From a slightly different perspective, Joshua (VFG2), who initially stated he did not use the term, then described it as a scientific term, used by scientists in their scientific studies of human relationships with the natural world. Joshua's definition highlighted his awareness of ecological relationships in the environment, while apparently objecting to the scientific knowledge that investigates and interprets these socially and personally meaningful relationships. His definition served to communicate that such investigations and interpretations were not about who he was nor about his experience of the environment (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2, Part b).

In presenting these initial definitions of environment, nature and ecology, it is evident that there was partial agreement on meanings and interpretations of the terms, with varying consensus within and across the groups. But there were also diverse views. Environment and nature were also, at times, and in certain groups, ambiguously defined and/or overlapped in definition – including with respect to ecology and environment.

Nevertheless, they provided a critical insight into groups' perceptions of a) how they were embedded within the environment, b) what environment comprised of and c) the relationships between humans (social), between humans and non-humans, as well as non-humans and non-humans. As such, the notion of ecological empowerment, as used in this thesis, refers to the extent to which groups felt they could influence, on their terms, ecological relations and their embeddedness within the environment. There was a sense of knowing and tacit reliance in participants' and groups' definitions of environment and nature. This suggests that participants did not consciously think of or require what the environment meant on an everyday basis. Definitions do, however, also suggest an emphasis on what comes into focus when participants and/or groups need to define or interpret environment, especially with respect to particular ecological relationships and contexts. This provided an early indication of ecological identity as moral and relational, emerging from everyday social-ecological dwelling interaction, as well as the relational interpretation of environment and nature. These tacit interpretations were consistently evident and further illustrated in the other key emergent themes (across all groups).

7.2.2 Shared early formative environment

The findings suggest that there were notable differences in respect of the environments participants and/or groups experienced in their early formative years. These findings were especially evident in groups' initial constructions and to a greater or lesser extent, in subsequent constructions. Such findings were also supported by participants' baseline questionnaire responses. Two key aspects are discussed in what follows, a) the physical character and geographic and social boundedness of early formative environments, and b) the emotionally perceived ecological relations within these environments.

Physical character and geographic and social boundedness

A physical description, together with a geographical definition of Hout Bay is presented in Chapter 1 – also see Figure 1.1. Hout Bay is a small, seaside village in which different communities have settled at various times. Under apartheid, it was largely defined as a

white area with provisions for the local coloured community and arguably some black people (Chapter 1).

Harbour groups presented Hout Bay as their early formative environment, with participants either being born and/or growing up there (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2). Both Harbour groups also constructed Hout Bay as the historic home environment of their community, establishing an emotional link to the area. Notably, this link – as being embedded in Hout Bay – spanned apartheid and democratic governments and their policies, particularly those affecting settlement and movement. The combination of personal and community histories was key to their sense of identity as being embedded in Hout Bay – of belonging (For examples see Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2, Part a, and Box 4.2).

Similarly, both Imizamo Yethu focus groups, who comprised only Xhosas, emphasised their early formative environment, the Transkei/Eastern Cape, as a central part of their identity. This environment was also constructed by both Imizamo Yethu groups as the traditional home environment of their Xhosa community. Like the Harbour groups, IYFG1 and 2 were emotionally linked to what was presented as their community's unique biographical embeddedness in the Transkei/Eastern Cape (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, Part a). In this respect, the one exception, Nora (IYFG1), who was not born in the Transkei, similarly felt it was an important Xhosa community environment – to the extent that she also visited there with her children so that they could directly perceptually experience being Xhosa in this critical formative environment and in so doing learn the meaning of particular aspects of the environment (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Box 6.2).

Harbour and Imizamo Yethu focus groups were similar with respect to their presentations of the geographical and social boundedness of their community home environments; however they contrasted in respect of the scale of their communities. Despite the geographical expanse and physical diversity of the Xhosa community home environment,

the Imizamo Yethu community was ethnically strongly bonded as Xhosas, presenting themselves as Xhosa's everywhere – anywhere, that is 'at home' though elsewhere in the world (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2). This was less certain in respect of the Harbour groups, especially with respect to HFG2, where the inference was of uncertainty with regard to who they would be if they were fully disembedded from their geographic, social and ecological relations in Hout Bay (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Parts a, c).

In contrast to the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu focus groups, the Valley groups did not share an early formative community home environment (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, Part a). As evidenced in their initial constructions, Valley groups' participants were geographically and socially distanced from their particular early formative environments. It was also unclear as to how they were embedded in those environments; Valley groups tended to speak of the 'here and now' of Hout Bay as their present meaningful environment. In part, this could be because Hout Bay was what bound them together as group in this context; and in part because they did not share a common early formative environment. Most Valley participants found during the sessions that they had a shared experience of urban environments, prior to their migration to what was perceived to be the more rural environment of Hout Bay. For many, this was the South African urbanised province, Gauteng. What bound them together was their construction of themselves as belonging to rural-countryside-village and being liberals and white. Despite the differences with the other groups, Valley groups were potentially similar to the Imizamo Yethu groups, with respect to their capacity to be rural-countryside-village and liberal anywhere where it was possible to maintain such social and ecological relations and experiences (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, Part a, c).

In essence, the identities of Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups were significantly linked to particular physical, geographic and social community home environments, while the Valley groups were not. Even so, the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups did differ in respect of the scale of their home environments and their social embeddedness.

However, regardless of this connectivity or lack thereof (on a group basis) to an important early formative environment, Imizamo Yethu and Valley groups were similarly able to be who they were in other environments – unlike the Harbour groups, where this possibility was viewed with uncertainty and concern.

Engaging in ecological relations and its emotional significance

Environment, as defined by groups, was about being ecologically embedded and engaged within their human and non-human surroundings. The deeply emotional character of this ecological embeddedness for the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu, including their ecological relations within their early community formative environments, were illuminated in their constructions of who they were. For these two communities' focus groups, the social level of community and community membership also appeared to be more pertinent than the biographies of individual participants. This focus was underscored by participants' expressions of loyalty to their respective communities. This was most evident in HFG1 and IYFG1 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1, Part a; Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Part a); it was also evident in HFG2. The notable exception was Harold, who expressed some disloyalty in that he was 'seriously' considering leaving his community. Even so, there was a tacit awareness in this expression which gave Harold's sentiment deep significance (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Part a). Explicit assertions of community loyalty were absent, but strongly inferred by IYFG2 in the course of their constructions as Xhosas, from the Transkei/Eastern Cape. An example was Elizabeth's construction of the dilemma she faced in leaving the Eastern Cape as a consequence of drought and poverty (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2, Part a).

Participants in these groups tied their stories to that of their communities, such that their individual stories were the story of their community. Nevertheless, as will be explored, there were subtle differences between these groups' construction/s.

Both Harbour groups constructions were rooted in the present and the past of Hout Bay. Harbour groups narratives strove to reinforce and/or make coherent old meanings of Hout Bay because it was important to how they continued to define themselves and live (and vice versa). For example, in Story 1b (Box 4.2), HFG1 constructed an ecologically significant narrative about who they were as community, uniquely of Hout Bay. This was evident in their construction of their intimate ecological relationship with a local beach. This dwelling relationship was about experiencing themselves socially in relation to their environment. 'First Beach' can be said to symbolically reflect, in part, who they were, namely, an ecologically intimate community of Hout Bay. This perception of this beach persists, even though, it was later filled in, and more recently developed into a helipad. Additionally, under apartheid rule, non-Whites only had access to designated beaches. This narrative can therefore also be considered an ecological empowerment narrative, that is, a form of ecological self determination with regard to how they chose to be embedded in Hout Bay, in contrast to the politically directed spatial and social embeddedness typical of the apartheid era.

Similar examples from both HFG1 and HFG2 concern their construction of their local marine relations as a significant way in which their community had come to know themselves, as a fishing community (Boxes 4.3; 4.5). This extended beyond economic meaning to a symbolic and practical, skilful intimacy with the sea boats and fish. Even though many of the Harbour participants either did not fish or had stopped fishing, they still defined themselves in respect of their community, as fisherpeople of Hout Bay. This underscores the continued emotional significance in their ecological identity construction of their community's embeddedness within its early formative environment.

Similarly, both Imizamo Yethu groups' constructions of identity were grounded in their traditional Xhosa community's ecological embeddedness in their early formative environment. According to IYFG1, to be Xhosa was to discover Xhosa, critically in early childhood, by directly perceptually engaging with their community's traditional social and

non-human environment (Box 6.2). It was about the experience of Xhosa friendliness and discovering Xhosa moral respect for everything, for their human and non-human environment (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Part b; Box 6.2). Such values were reaffirmed in their expectations of 'friendly' dwelling in Imizamo Yethu (Box 6.3). While IYFG2 did not specifically detail the importance of learning to be Xhosa in their early formative community home environment, they did repeatedly present themselves as knowing how to be Xhosa in their dwelling in Imizamo Yethu (Box 6.5). This was defined as a moral ecological being, about caring in their human and non-human relations.

In contrast to the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups, both Valley groups presented themselves as broadly connected, mobile social selves (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Part a; Section 5.3.2, Part b). They chose to live in and be defined by Hout Bay's rural-countryside-village environmental character. Their physical, social and ecological mobility distanced them from who they were as a social, ecological group in their early formative environments. However, their mobility suggests creative choices about their identity. Nevertheless, the meanings of their early formative environmental experiences persist and continue in some way to inform their definitions of themselves. This was reflective of a community with a strong individualistic character – where a greater tension existed between the particularities of selves and the commonality of group.

7.2.3 Embedded as particular ecological communities

The previous section illustrates the importance of early formative environments in Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' identity constructions and the lack thereof in identity construction, on a group basis, with respect to the Valley groups. This section discusses how groups' critical social identities and moral positions inform their constructions of themselves as particular ecological communities.

Ethnic identities

Despite individual particularities, almost all participants within each focus group constructed remarkably similar presentations of who they were. These presentations were initially constructed at the start of the sessions, when participants were likely to be more cautious in their presentation of themselves and their assessment of others' presentations (Goffman, 1990; Finch & Lewis, 2003). Additionally, each community's pair of focus groups' presentations of themselves were remarkably similar. These resonances within and between the same community focus groups suggested a resourcing of familiar stories in wider circulation, about who they were based on their community membership of respective Hout Bay communities.

In comparing and contrasting the Harbour, Valley and Imizamo Yethu groups' ecological definitions of themselves one finds that these were not so much contrasting as particular. The Harbour groups defined themselves as a Cape Coloured fishing community, uniquely and historically embedded in Hout Bay. Although they made reference to being Coloured, I argue that Cape Coloured was also implicit in their dwelling claim to Hout Bay in the Cape (see Chapter 1). Imizamo Yethu groups defined themselves as Xhosa, embedded in Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay and socially and ecologically connected to the Transkei; while the Valley groups defined themselves as rural-countryside-village people, who were also liberal and white. These definitions reflected the groups' social and wider ecological embeddedness within the environment, around which their community and Hout Bay were meaningful to them. Such definitions also illuminated the basis on which they felt that they were ecologically empowered.

HFG1 and 2 presented their community as uniquely synonymous with Hout Bay. Their story was the story of Hout Bay, as a wider human and non-human environment, and it in turn was regarded as their story. This claim was central to their ecological empowerment. Implicit in their constructions, especially that of their unique embeddedness, as also

evidenced in their baseline questionnaire responses, was their Cape Coloured ethnic identity.

While the Harbour groups' ecological identity constructions were critically grounded in their ethnic identity and Hout Bay, the Imizamo Yethu groups' ecological identity constructions were fundamentally grounded in their Xhosa identity. IYFG1 and 2 claimed to be embedded in the environment as Xhosas and based their ecological empowerment on the premise of being Xhosa. Notably, they presented themselves as Xhosas who were of the Transkei, as well as, of the developing Imizamo Yethu community (Hout Bay) – with the emphasis on Imizamo Yethu.

In respect of the Valley groups, the relationship between ethnic identity constructs and groups' ecological identity constructions were more complicated and more particular than that evident in the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups constructions. VFG1 and 2 initially presented themselves as particular individuals who had similarly chosen to dwell and define themselves as rural and/or village (VFG1) or countryside and/or village (VFG2). These were social and ecological definitions which suggested an ecological creativity in choosing who and how to be – a reflection of their ecological empowerment on an individual basis. Additionally, in VFG2, Zara and Brandon, the two youngest participants in this group, presented a more diverse, particular, definition of themselves. They both felt that they were of two environments, two worlds, namely, the peaceful countryside of Hout Bay and the busy urban environment of Cape Town. These definitions were sufficiently important for both participants to contrast with the wider group narrative. Whether this was a further reflection of the individual character of the Valley community and/or that of Valley youth identity is the subject of further study.

Valley groups also defined themselves as liberal and tacitly as White. This was a sensitive and complicated definition that emerged more fully later in both sessions. VFG1 presented their dilemma of being liberal and White South African in a democratically principled and

governed society; where all peoples had basic human rights including the political freedom to stand up for their values. VFG1 asserts that despite this, as liberal White community they did not stand together to advocate and/or defend their environmental values. In contrast, the black community was positively perceived as doing just this. VFG2's construction of themselves as liberal similarly raised the notion of themselves as part of a liberal society. This was especially and more intimately associated with Hout Bay, where they dwelt, with its diverse dwelling communities and with their everyday experience of South Africa's commitment to democratic principles and rule. According to VFG1 and 2, being liberal was about a way of being in their social and ecological relations, a way of being immersed in the environment; this interpretation was also supported by groups' definitions of environment, nature and ecology. For VFG1, this meant socially engaging to advocate and defend their environmental values, what they valued in their ecological relations, with respect to their human and non-human environment (see Box 5.3). VFG2's position was similar but with a greater and particular emphasis on everyday social relations, within their community and across different communities (see Box 5.5). From this perspective, I argue that for both Valley groups, liberal was a social and ecological definition, both in practice and experience. According to the Valley groups, being rural-countryside-village and liberal White reflected two scales of ecological empowerment. The former was more particular and the latter a wider guiding empowerment principle.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are varying views in the literature regarding identity as single and/or unified or plural and/or fragmented. There is also debate as to the attraction of personal identity versus that of group identity (see for example Bauman, 2004 – Chapter 2). It is therefore significant that the focus groups constructed their ecological identities around core ethnic (social) identities, where, social empowerment – being a close Cape Coloured Harbour community, a Xhosa community, a socially 'village' intimate and liberal White community – blurred into ecological empowerment. This was interpreted as more than a consequence of years of apartheid and colonial enforced ethnic definitions

arising from South Africa's history (see Chapter 1). Notably, White is regarded as an ethnic identity because it was effectively so under apartheid govern and remains so under the new government. In the main, people in South Africa explicitly and implicitly still broadly define themselves socially as white, black, coloured, Indian etcetera – as evidenced by participants' baseline questionnaire responses.

Whereas who they were ecologically was implicit in the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups social (ethnic) identity constructions, the Valley groups' ethnic identity was further qualified in respect of their ecological identity, namely, broadly as ecologically liberal, and particularly as rural-countryside-village. In other words, the Valley groups' ecological identity was not exclusive to their ethnic identity. Other, non-Whites, could be liberal (Box 6.5), and could conceivably be of rural-countryside-village, providing they desired and facilitated, through their dwelling, such openness and intimacy within their human and non-human surroundings.

Ethnic identity was clearly important in organising social and ecological meaning. This was fundamental to the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' constructions yet less so in respect of the Valley groups. This may be a reflection of the intent of Valley participants to distance themselves from ethnic apartheid associated definitions while at the same time emphasising their particularities, as rural, village, liberal people.

Nature as a moral standard, moral intent and ecological being

As discussed in Section 7.2, definitions of environment and nature by groups (and in the case of Valley groups, ecology) were morally framed. Nature was presented as a moral standard of existence by HFG2, VFG1 and 2 and IYFG1. For the Valley groups it was about purity (VFG1 and 2) and superior existence (VFG1). Being of the environment was presented similarly as about being morally involved (HFG2), being aware of one's ecological connectivity (VFG1 and 2) and respecting everything within their environment (IYFG1 and IYFG2). This initially appeared less evident in HFG1 where only Matt and

Julia expressed a moral responsibility of care for everything in the environment. However, as discussed below, these constructions of moral ecological being were more complicated.

In both Harbour groups, their community was about who they were and their experience of themselves and others, socially and ecologically. Their moral ecological being, for the most part, was tacit, inherent to their Harbour community's inseparable ecological involvement in Hout Bay. HFG2's emphasis on wanting others to respect them as a Harbour community was consistent with their initial definition of respecting everything regarding environment-nature. HFG1 was more tacit in their presentation of moral ecological being in Hout Bay, as illustrated in their stories about First Beach and the wider surroundings of Hout Bay (see Boxes 4.2; 4.3). But both HFG1 and 2 presented an ecological and moral framing of themselves in a way profoundly linked to their social identity.

It is this interpretation, of natural embeddedness as particular community, which resonated with IYFG1 and IYFG2. Like the Harbour groups, ecological morality was inherent in IYFG1 and 2's community Xhosa identity and experience of their Xhosa community. IYFG1's initial environment-nature definitions and beliefs highlighted the importance they placed on being respectful to everything within their environment, humans and non-humans (see Boxes 6.1; 6.3). This was also expressed by IYFG2 in placing great importance on cleaning the environment out of respect for themselves and others – humans and non-humans (see Box 6.5). It was about a right way and a wrong way of being in the environment. Furthermore, being Xhosa, as IYFG1 stressed, was a natural, traditional way of being in the Transkei, their traditional community home. Both IYFG1 and 2's constructions suggest that being Xhosa everywhere was a natural moral ecological way of being. In this respect, these groups differed from the Harbour focus groups.

Despite the resonance between all the groups' interpretation of nature as presenting a standard which they as humans saw as moral, Valley groups differed in respect of their construction of being ecologically moral. For Valley groups there was nature as purity, an ultimate way of existing in the environment – engaging in ecological relations – and a right and wrong way (socially and ecologically) to engage as liberal people in a liberal society. Being liberal was presented as an expectation, a moral marker for all those who dwelt in South Africa's or more particularly Hout Bay's liberal society. Liberal social and ecological being was constructed by VFG1 and 2 as a choice beyond ethnic affiliations. In contrast, the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' constructions were particular to their communities, their social-ecological ethnic identities. However, all groups shared the view that there was a moral way of dwelling that concerned respectful ecological embeddedness and engagement. A significant part this was about being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled. Notably for the Harbour groups, this was particular to Hout Bay; for the Imizamo Yethu groups it was part of being Xhosa anywhere and everywhere and for the Valley groups it was part of being liberal. Notably, IYFG1 and VFG1 presented themselves at times as falling short of their moral ecological values in their everyday dwelling practice; where sometimes they were 'loose with nature' (IYFG1) out of necessity or were frail in their lack of ecological knowledge and skill (compared to nature) and yet continued arrogant existence (VFG1).

Being of environment, of nature, of a particular community was, for all groups, about a moral social-ecological interpretation of themselves and others, about how they dwelt in practice and about their experiences of their social-ecological relations.

7.2.4 Ecological knowledge and skills

Within the previous theme, the constructive link for groups between moral ecological being and ecological knowing and dwelling skill, namely knowing about and living the right way, was illuminated. This theme focuses on groups' ecological knowledge and skill,

namely, about what groups know, their skilful acts and how they acquire such knowledge and skill.

All groups presented themselves as directly perceptually engaged with their surroundings, and through this engagement discovered their particular meaning and became/were skilful. As previously discussed for the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups, this was on the basis of their social communities and definitions thereof, as Cape Coloured Harbour and Xhosas. In contrast, for the Valley groups this was particularly linked to their valued rural-countryside-village existence and identity, as well as more broadly encompassed within their constructions of liberal community membership.

Ecological meaning and skill were discovered and evident in a variety of ways. These included everyday livelihood fishing (HFG1 and 2), or in the course of everyday dwelling, walking and driving around Hout Bay and observing the wetlands-flood plains (VFG1) and pollution (VFG2). For others, meaning and skills arose from being in the Transkei forest with other Xhosa community members (IYFG1), or in the course of everyday dwelling in Imizamo Yethu, experiencing unclean dwelling (IYFG1 and 2) and hazardous fire events (IYFG1). In turn, HFG1 and 2 could claim to be ecologically knowledgeable and skilful fisherpeople; VFG1 could claim to know about the local flood risk including particular aspects of their surroundings which they skilfully had observed; VFG2 were similarly knowledgeable about the risk of pollution and that posed by the practices of the so-called ecologically uneducated; and both IYFG1 and 2 could claim to know about and be skilful in their ecological embeddedness in Imizamo Yethu, living, for example, cleanly to avoid risk to their own wellbeing and that of others.

The construction of knowledge during the sessions themselves was also a skill. It offered a window into how groups within their communities constructed and reconstructed social-ecological knowledge in a social setting. Harbour groups were evidently skilful storytellers. A similar proficiency, possibly constrained by communicating in a language other than

their home Xhosa language, was also evident in IYFG1 and to a lesser extent IYFG2. These groups knew their stories, they knew who they were and were knowledgeable about their ecological embeddedness. Explicitly and implicitly, their stories widely resourced stories in broader circulation. VFG1 and 2, like the other groups, also told familiar, spontaneously constructed stories about themselves as educated liberals, which were not contested.

VFG1 differed to some extent from these other groups, including VFG2. This was evident in VFG1's construction of the flood risk to Hout Bay and their story of their own apathetic support for their environmental values (Box 6.3) and construction of liberal being. VFG1's flood risk narrative reveals how the group shared and co-constructed knowledge about their surroundings through skilful, contestation and legitimation of different knowledge claims. This was particularly significant as this narrative was clearly unfamiliar, in its entirety or in part, to some in the group. While some knowledge claims that were shared were contested in respect of their meaning, others were not. For example, whether Hout Bay was in an earthquake zone or not was challenged, and neither were details of Hout Bay's wetland, with several participants confirming and adding consistent details about it.

IYFG1 and 2 and VFG1 added a further dimension to their constructions of being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful in addition to that acquired through direct perceptual engagement in their everyday dwelling. IYFG1 and 2 also valued formal education (schooling) as a means for themselves, their families to reach for a particularly desired good life (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Part a; Section 6.4.2, Part a: Box 6.2). VFG1 appreciated formal, specifically specialist, knowledge, such as that provided by the river forum wetlands and floodplains (Box 5.2) in their understanding of their surroundings.

Being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled, it can be argued as per the findings, are particular expressions, embedded in everyday practice, of identity, of ways of belonging and ways of discovering meaning within the environment, of ecological empowerment.

7.2.5 Pursuit of a good life

Across all the groups, Hout Bay was constructed as a social-ecological choice; it was about pursuing a desired good life. The findings suggest that people embedded themselves in Hout Bay, specifically in their respective communities, based on appealing and shared group social-ecological attributes. Evidently, the different communities' groups differed in respect of their initial relationship with Hout Bay and their definition of their good life.

The Harbour groups presented their identity as biographically tied to the Harbour community's wider ecological Hout Bay biography. This was regardless of whether participants were born in Hout Bay, had moved there when young or had been forced to reside in a particular part of Hout Bay during the apartheid era. HFG1 and 2 presented Hout Bay as understood as a good life and a desired good life. This was supported by the implicit and explicit mention of loyalty to Hout Bay as place and community. It was as Debbie (VFG1) expressed, about feeling safe and secure. It was inherently about who they were and also about who they could not particularly be if they left.

In contrast, VFG1 and 2 participants had, for the most part, chosen to move to and settle in Hout Bay based on their interpretation of Hout Bay as a rural-countryside-village, non-urban, dwelling experience. It was an individual choice which resonated with other like-minded Valley people who had similarly chosen to settle in Hout Bay. They felt that Hout Bay offered them this particular open and intimate human and non-human relationship experience which reflected who they were (and desired to be), namely, their ecological identity. The evidence was less definitive in respect of all participants expressing their active choice to settle in Hout Bay. The evidence suggests that all valued Hout Bay as a good, rural-countryside-village life, though not all participants made an active choice to settle there. Those from VFG1 made this choice as adults, with a few, such as Glenn, noting that they also considered it a desirable good life for their children. In contrast, VFG2 comprised a mixture of participants who had moved there as adults and as children

– as a consequence of their parents' choices – a point Zara (VFG2) underscored. Indeed in VFG2, Zara and Brandon, both aged 21-29 years, presented themselves as of country-village Hout Bay and of the urban Cape Town environments. Together these two contrasting environments reflected their desired good life (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, Part a).

In contrast, IYFG1 and 2 considered themselves to be of two good lives/environments, namely the Transkei/Eastern Cape, their traditional Xhosa home environment, and Hout Bay, their chosen dwelling environment. The possible exception might be Annah (IYFG1), aged 21-29 years, who definitively presented the Transkei as her good Xhosa life, and even though she appreciated that living in Hout Bay facilitated access to her desired education, she did not consider it a desirable good life in itself. However, IYFG1 and 2, unlike the Valley groups, did not primarily choose to settle in Hout Bay because of its desired social-ecological experience or its facilitation of who they desired to be. Rather, Hout Bay was about facilitating their reach for desirable socio-economic wellbeing for themselves and, for many, their families. This was enhanced by an appreciation of the character of Hout Bay's human and non-human surroundings, including an aesthetic appreciation of the surroundings and the initial perception of the lack of crime (social and ecological). The Transkei was presented as a good life in respect of being immersed in their traditional Xhosa community home environment. IYFG1 and 2 positively, negatively and ambivalently perceived both good life environments (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, Parts a, c). Notably, it was unclear as to the extent Hout Bay was or could also have been an economic choice for Valley participants. What was significant was their lack of mention of an economic interpretation of Hout Bay as their desired good life. This does not mean economic wellbeing was unimportant rather that in terms of Hout Bay it was not fundamental to their interpretation of that good life.

7.2.6 A sense of ecological risk

Even though the focus groups made clear their pursuit of their desired good lives, this pursuit was not without risk. To perceive risk was to perceive vulnerability. Living with risk was also about uncertain dwelling. At a group level, this was perceived as inextricably social and ecological. It is around these interpretations that risk was constructed.

For all groups, the implicit backdrop to the pursuit of a good life was the new political freedoms availed through South Africa's democratic government and Constitution (1996). This included freedom of movement and settlement, as well as education and economic opportunities. Under both apartheid and colonial rule, such freedom had been severely limited, especially with respect non-Whites. Conversely, Whites' freedoms were also constrained, with restrictions on where they could not reside and their social interaction with non-Whites (see Chapter 1).

Two related perceptions of risk emerged from the analysis of the focus groups, namely, a) the risk of losing familiar ecological experiences of who they were in the pursuit of their good life, and b) risk as emerging from social-ecological relationships. As such, risk is presented as a significant aspect driving ecological identity construction and reconstruction, influencing interpretations of how people belong within the environment – a fundamental part of how groups define meaningful places within the environment.

Risks to familiar ecological identities and experiences

HFG1, HFG2 and IYFG1 highlighted their deep concern regarding their perception of becoming increasingly distanced from meaningful experiences within their respective Hout Bay and Transkei/Eastern Cape traditional community home environments. Such physical, social and ecological distance threatened a fundamental way in which they came to know themselves as Harbour community of Hout Bay (HFG1 and 2) and Xhosa's (IYFG1). For HFG1, this was illustrated in their construction of their distancing from their direct interaction with their First Beach (Box 4.2) as a meaningful part of Hout Bay

signifying their community and defining ecological interactions. HFG1 and 2 constructions similarly presented their community as increasingly distanced from a meaningful, historical, ecological relationship with the local marine environment (see Boxes 4.3; 4.5); a relationship which was, for some members, a way of life and which had come to symbolically reflect a critical part of the Harbour community's unique ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay. Similarly, IYFG1 asserted that as Xhosas who had settled in Imizamo Yethu they were increasingly distanced from traditional Xhosa social and ecological experiences in the Transkei/Eastern Cape (see Boxes 6.2; 6.3). The risk to their familiar way of being Xhosa was especially perceived with respect to their community children who would no longer grow up in a traditional Xhosa environment but would instead dwell surrounded by those who practiced un-Xhosa ways and did not appear to value the significance of the traditional Xhosa experience. A similar point was made in HFG2 regarding the future of their next generation, their youth, where community was traditionally or familiarly defined (see Chapter 4 Box 4.4 together with supporting accounts).

Significantly, these valued and familiar ecological experiences also spanned apartheid rule. There was a sense of ecological empowerment in these familiar constructions of themselves despite their own political disempowerment at that time. Where non-Whites could only use certain beaches, HFG1 claims a beach as their own (see, Box 4.2). Where social settlement and economic opportunity was restricted, HFG1 and 2 claimed a social-economic-ecological meaningful relationship with the local marine environment (see Chapter 4, Boxes 4.3; 4.5; together with supporting excerpts for both core stories). Where the Transkei was a politically determined homeland, IYFG1 highlighted its significance to their Xhosa identity on the basis of Xhosa social-ecological embeddedness in their traditional home environment (see Boxes 6.1; 6.2). However, in present day democratically governed South Africa, with its political recognition of all communities and political freedom to choose how and where to be embedded within the environment,

HFG1 and 2 and IYFG1 considered their communities at risk of losing their familiar ecological identities and meanings.

Regardless of their respective community particularities, and the aforementioned similarities, the same three focus groups differed in respect of how this risk was constructed. For HFG1 and 2, this risk was about those with greater power within Hout Bay: 'intruders', those not originally from Hout Bay, as well as business-industry. They were viewed as lacking or having different social and ecological values. They were viewed as considering only their own interests, abusing the environment, lacking concern for the wellbeing of others, and failing to recognise the Harbour community's unique ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay. Throughout, there was an implicit immorality assigned to these groups. (See Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2, Parts a, c)

Revealing another dimension to the risk-as-loss dynamic, HFG1 considered South Africa's democratic Constitution (1996) as more powerful than their community; while at the same time they considered themselves as being empowered by that 'wonderful' constitution. This was linked to their expectation of the benefits of that constitution to their community. The dichotomy is evident in the risk arising from the apparent lack of recognition of their community's meaningful ecological relationship with the sea, via the fishing quota process, and its interpretation as a 'mistake', a confusing interpretation rather than an abuse of power (see Chapter 4, Box 4.3 and supporting excerpts). A similar construction is inferred by HFG2 in Story 2b (Box 4.5).

Significantly, unlike HFG2, HFG1 did not present themselves as part of this risk. HFG2 felt that some of their community members, especially the young generation, and their uncaring (immoral) social actions, put the whole community at social and ecological risk. Drawing on HFG2's initial definitions of environment-nature, social abuses, such as the cited gangsterism, crime and drugs and alcohol abuse, can conceivably be regarded as

having a socio-ecological impact on their living space – the freedom to be involved in the environment as community members (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Part a, Part c).

The advent of new political freedoms seen by IYFG1 as enabling their choice to pursue a particular good life in Hout Bay were also presented as central to the risk to their familiar Xhosa identity. IYFG1 reported that re-locating in the desire for a better education for the children had the unintended consequence of distancing them from their traditional Xhosa experience and identity. This was as a consequence of their children a) not been immersed in the traditional Xhosa environment during their critical formative years, b) growing up amidst a diverse ethnic community and attending multi-racial/cultural schools and c) (ironically) being dependent on formal schooling as a means of educating them about the environment. They also found themselves as a community not being true to their Xhosa codes and practices because of their dwelling needs and the social and ecological conditions of Imizamo Yethu (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Part a, Part c: Box 6.2).

IYFG2's story of their dwelling in Imizamo Yethu as Xhosas revealed a tacit concern regarding their strained Xhosa and non-Xhosa social-ecological experience of everyday life. Xhosas were presented as socially and ecologically respectful, morally knowledgeable and skilful in their clean and caring dwelling. By contrast, non-Xhosas were presented as lacking self worth and dignity; who were perceived as lacking in social-ecological moral knowledge and skill to live cleanly and with care. Like HFG1 and 2 and IYFG1, there was a construction of the ecological practice of others putting their community at risk – threatening the wellbeing of themselves and non-humans as well as their Xhosa ecological dwelling. Unlike HFG1 and 2 and IYFG1, IYFG2 did not articulate a fear of losing their familiar experience of themselves as Xhosas – as underpinned by experiences within their community's traditional environment. Again, in contrast to HFG2 and IYFG1, they did not reflexively consider themselves to be a part of the risk to their continued familiar experience of themselves. Rather, similar to HFG1, IYFG2's narrative

illuminated their sense of unease, of uncertainty about their pursuit of their good life, of their aspirations in democratically governed South Africa, grounded in their experience of this pursuit.

Valley focus groups' construction of risk to their familiar ecological experience of themselves was multi-faceted. Unlike the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups, the Valley groups, as groups and rural-countryside-village, liberal Hout Bay community members, did not have a shared, intimate social and ecological connectivity, as a particular community, as historically embedded in a particular environment. The extent to which they were familiar with themselves as group and/or Valley community was therefore different to the other groups. Arguably this is especially pertinent to their definition of themselves as rural-countryside-village – rather than Hout Bay community members *per se*. Many Valley participants had, for example, lived in urban environments prior to choosing to settle in a rural-countryside-village environment, as Hout Bay was interpreted; some also had earlier rural dwelling experiences. Additionally, the extent to which they perceived themselves at risk of losing this experience of themselves and their desired good life environment was complicated. Both Valley groups felt that development or progress was a threat to their desired rural-countryside-village embeddedness. Moreover, this threat was especially specific to Hout Bay. VFG1 participants were divided in their perception of this risk as a threat to their ecological identity. This ranged from perceptions of no longer belonging to considering leaving Hout Bay as the meaning of the place for them had changed. But the broadened and adaptive responses of many others enabled Hout Bay to come to mean more than a rural-countryside-village, it had come to mean home. VFG2's position was of uncertainty but still being able to find coherence in their experience of Hout Bay as countryside-village.

Notably, Valley groups felt they were at risk as White liberals in a liberal South African society. It was this definition of themselves that was perhaps more familiar and more critical to their experience of themselves and their wider environment. VFG1 and 2 both

constructed themselves as a risk to their liberal definition because even though they considered themselves ecologically moral, knowledgeable and skilled, they did not always interact within liberal society in such ways. This reflexive consideration, as being part of the risk to themselves, was similar to that presented by HFG2 and IYFG1. Moreover, for VFG1 the dilemma was further complicated by their claim that while they did not stand up for their environmental values, what was meaningful to them, others did, notably those who 'toy-toyed', those who were typically previously disadvantaged under the un-liberal apartheid rule. For VFG1, this was because of the individual character of their White liberal community (versus the social character of others) and because of their fear to stand up for their values which ironically had become an inherent characteristic, through their experience of apartheid rule in which they were also beneficiaries. Similarly, VFG2 felt fearful to interact with other Hout Bay communities beyond their social community in a social-ecological liberal manner, in ways consistent with their ecological knowledge and skills. This was similarly because of their historical position as Whites who were apartheid beneficiaries. However, in contrast to VFG1, this was viewed as problematic because they felt socially and ecologically disempowered as liberals in Hout Bay's (South Africa) liberal society – not wishing to be seen by those previously disadvantaged under apartheid rule as in any way not liberal in a liberal society (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1, Part a, Part c: Box 5.3; Section 5.3.2, Part c: Box 5.5).

Risk as a dynamic in social-ecological relationships

This risk was about the threats to humans and non-humans that arise through interactive webs of cause and consequence between humans, between humans and non-humans and between non-humans and non-humans. This narrative was most evident in constructions of VFG1 and 2 and IYFG1 and 2.

VFG1's Story 1b (Box 5.2), is a good example. VFG1 presented a flood-earthquake (ecological) risk to Hout Bay, specifically the well-being or safety of its resident settlement (social). This construction illustrates the perceived connectivity of social and ecological

relations and the risk of a flood inherent in these relations. The Hout Bay settlement, choices involved in establishing dams on Table Mountain to supply potable water to Hout Bay, the existence of an earthquake fault line on Table Mountain and a flood plain-wetland in Hout Bay and the relative locations and impact relations between these aspects all present a complex human and non-human relationship in which risk was inherent. With a different focus, VFG2's Story 2b (Box 5.5) illuminated their perception of risk inherent in social-ecological relations. This involved liberal relations within and between the Valley and Imizamo Yethu communities, and between them and Hout Bay 'outsiders', pollution including rubbish as well as insufficient access to government garbage collection services, relative geographical positioning between community settlements in Hout Bay, and rainfall.

There were several examples of IYFG1's constructions of risk which illustrate their perception of how risk was inherent in their experience of their social-ecological relations with themselves and with others. IYFG1's Story 1c (Box 6.3), for example, is similar yet more intense than the aforementioned VFG2 construction of risk. IYFG2's Story 2b (Box 6.5), reflects a similar intensity yet without the reflexive consideration of themselves as part of the risk in their social-ecological relations. This intensity was possibly attributable to IYFG1's intimate everyday experience of themselves in relations with their Xhosa Imizamo Yethu community and IYFG1 and 2's everyday experience of overcrowding with socially determined others. They (IYFG1) and others (IYFG1 and 2) were perceived as putting their Xhosa being at risk, through everyday dwelling practices. These practices were said to be reflective of moral ecological orientations and ecological knowledge and skills. For example, a) IYFG1 presented themselves as Xhosas as putting themselves at risk (by lighting fires to cook food), (see Box 6.3); b) other informal settlers, who did not dwell respectfully, were said to put the human and non-human environment (everyone and everything) at risk, for example, through unclean practices such as polluting (IYFG1 and 2 – see Boxes 6.3; 6.5); and c) the perceived failure of the democratic government to

deliver on basic rights, such as potable water and regular refuse collection, was seen as placing them at risk as democratic citizens (IYFG1 – see Box 6.3).

7.3 Group ecological identity: research questions and key findings

Having explored the key emergent themes in the different groups' ecological identity constructions (Section 7.2) this section discusses the key findings in respect of the research questions and the literature (Chapters 1 and 2).

The central research question was: how are group ecological identities constructed? How groups regarded themselves as embedded within the environment and orientated within their ecological relations were fundamental constructs of their ecological identity. It underpinned their construction of narrative coherency and brought into focus the presence of the past in the present and anticipated future. All groups linked their ecological identity to their ethnic social identity, something which no doubt also reflects South Africa's history of ethnic politics (Chapter 1).

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, identity was an especially driven project in the South African context, where recent political freedoms presented new experiences and new possibilities of who and how to be. Woodward (2002) and Taylor (2010) speak of the importance of claiming to belong to place, such as home, to people's identities – albeit as individuals. This study's findings illuminate the importance to identity constructions of groups' claims of belonging and/or not belonging to meaningful places, connecting or not connecting with a multitude of possible meanings of place (Taylor, 2003), and of being engaged in particular, meaningful social-ecological relations in defining ways.

7.3.1 An ecological perspective of identity

The first of three supporting research questions asks, how is environment is understood and used by different communities to construct their group ecological identity? Despite their social diversity, from the outset, groups' initial definitions of environment, nature and

ecology located themselves within the environment, immersed or embedded in the environment as a condition of human existence. Environment was interpreted by groups as their surroundings, what they saw and what they experienced within webs of ecological relations. They interpreted themselves as actively, sensually - perceptually - engaged in complex webs of everyday ecological relations of which social relations were a part. Who they were, are and could be was a function of their experience and interpretation of themselves (and others), as particular communities actively dwelling within the environment, within their particular social and ecological relations. Ecological being, as VFG1 and 2, and HFG2 suggest, was about humans dwelling hand in hand with the non-human, natural world (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Part b; Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Part b; Section 5.3.2: Part b). As such, the social world was presented as inextricably bound up, in human and non-human and non-human and non-human relations, with the wider ecological world. I refer to this as an ecological dwelling perspective.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, identity (social and ecological) is often described as recognition of what is same or similar. In the environmental literature, environmental or ecological identity is described as the extent to which people identify with or feel similar to nature, the non-human world, and their 'social and moral' valuation of nature as part of their wider community (for example: Clayton & Opatow, 2003: 8). Groups' interpretations of environment and their ecological embeddedness suggest they view themselves as part of a broad human and non-human community. Groups strongly tended to emphasise their interrelationships within their broad social-ecological community rather than emphasising their similarity to nature. As such, ecological relationships are conceivably about more than living organisms. Such a perspective is echoed by the study of environmental sociology's focus on a wider environmental community and its interconnections (Bell, 1998).

This study's findings underscore the importance of particular ecological relationships and the emotionally meaningful experiences of those relations in the course of everyday

dwelling, as well as the reflexive social constructions of those experiences that groups undertake in their ecological definition of themselves. This interpretation moves beyond relations of human and non-human living organisms to suggest that non-human, including non-living, entities are also part of their meaningful ecological relations (see Section 7.2). Riessman (2008) argues that humans are the only ones who narrate their experiences of these relations and their identity. The findings from this study show that this does not preclude humans from being in a meaningful relationship with a non-narrative environmental entity. As VFG1 observed, they interact ecologically with the relationship potential to impact their environment positively or negatively (see discussion of the 'big picture' and the 'Law of Nature' in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Part b). HFG1's narration of 'First Beach' (Box 4.2) illuminated their social recreational relations on the beach, as one type of human-non-human relationship; their construction of the beach as a symbolic expression of their community's ecological identity, most notably as uniquely rooted in Hout Bay, illuminated another type of human-non-human relationship.

In another African study, Kreike (2003) found that although Africans in Ovamboland (Southern Angola and Northern Namibia) live in a deforested, densely populated rural environment, they had grown a significant amount of useful Indigo trees in their backyards. This relationship resulted in the continued presence of an important tree species. According to Kreike (2003) the meaning of this practice lies in subsistence requirements and the contribution to their identity construction made by the brewing of a cultural brew from the fruit of the trees. Kreike (2003) does not speak of ecological relations but nonetheless, her insights into deforestation and the usefulness and symbolic meaning of growing Indigo trees, highlights the many varied social and ecological relations in which people are engaged. This resonates with this study's findings in which an ecological perspective is central.

Nature was rarely defined by participants as selves or as a group. When it was defined, it was done so to strategically present nature as separate or distinct from environment (see Sections 7.2.1, 7.2.3). As earlier sections of this Chapter show, nature was commonly interpreted as the non-human environment and the groups strategically defined nature as about a moral way, a right way of existing within the environment or *being environment*. For VFG1 and 2 this was on the basis of purity (nature) versus impurity (humankind), or frail humankind (VFG1). In contrast, the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups thought of themselves as part of nature, as environment. Despite this difference they too expressed a moral intent in their dwelling and ecological definition.

Moral ecological being implies a valuation and concern for the environment, including the way groups were immersed in the environment. Nature as interpreted by the Valley groups as 'pure' suggests an intrinsic valuation – valued for itself (for a discussion see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3 – Williams, 1995: 234-240). This is similarly so in respect of Imizamo Yethu and Harbour groups' aesthetic appreciation of their surroundings. All groups present what Williams (1995) would refer to as a moral intention. This was about their intention to dwell responsibly (VFG1 and 2), respectfully (IYFG1 and 2) or caringly (HFG1 and 2). This intention was human in origin, but deeply emotionally about human-non-human relations, beyond an anthropocentric orientation (see Sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3). For all groups, it was also about moral ecological knowledge and skill, which is that of knowing how to dwell morally (see Sections 7.2.3, 7.2.4).

This moral interpretation of nature further nuances the aforementioned ecological dwelling perspective. As the discussion of the subsequent research questions illustrate, it is this perspective that was fundamental to how groups defined themselves ecologically.

A dwelling perspective

Ingold's (2000) ecological dwelling perspective of the environment draws on the way in which traditional hunter-gatherer type communities live (Chapter 2). In such circumstances, they and the non-human landscape engage such that the landscape is their story and they are the story of the landscape. Even so, this study's findings of groups, some more traditional than others, living in modern circumstances resonate with Ingold's argument that social relations are a part of ecological relations (2000: 5), with no notable division between the two (2000: 60). These findings also resonate with Clayton and Opatow's (2003: 8-12) assertion that the experience of nature, the non-human part of the environment, is not separate from social experience. Nevertheless, they also recognise that some individuals and groups may emphasise only their direct experience of nature. Still I argue in respect of social identity (social self and groups) this identification remains social (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5).

Ecological identity constructions by the groups appear to be informed by their ecological practice (which, as argued, encompasses social dimensions) as it subsists in their experience of being in the environment. Such a finding resonates with Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a) – see also Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1. Furthermore, is home significant in peoples' construction of their identity and belonging to place as argued by Woodward (2002), Giuliani (2003) and Taylor (2010)? Consistent with such narrative research about identity, belonging and the meaning of place, this study's findings illustrate how groups' experiences are interpreted and reinterpreted through narration as a continual sense-making process about the meaning of place, how they belong and their ecological identity. As such, familiar narratives in wider circulation were drawn upon in ecological identity constructions, as were new narratives arising from new experiences of familiar and unfamiliar dwelling places. For example, the familiar and unfamiliar Hout Bay for Harbour groups were used in just such a way, as were the familiar Transkei and unfamiliar Hout Bay for Imizamo Yethu groups (see Sections 7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.2.5, 7.2.6). Identity constructions by groups of their early formative community environment (with the

exception of VFG1 and 2) encompassed perceptions of a) those environments political and physical character and definition; b) a locale, as in a setting of social interaction (Agnew, 1987) as well as wider ecological interaction; c) a social-ecological dynamic, and d) the emotional significance of their human and non-human ecological relations (see Section 7.2). In conjunction, these four elements appear to go beyond Agnew's (1987) well known definition of place, as well as the interpretation of place as 'networks of social relations' (Massey, 1994: 120). This is especially so with respect to ecological relations, where the interpretation of place is as much more than a setting or backdrop, to social-ecological relations.

To the respective communities groups, Hout Bay and the Transkei were meaningful places or 'centres' (Ingold, 2000: 192) without emotional boundaries (see Section 7.2.2, 7.2.3). Meaning arose from the activity of groups dwelling within and actively interpreting places regardless of their physical presence (or lack thereof) there.

From social space to ecological space

Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a, 1990b) social theory of human practice of dwelling within the environment is focused on humans in the social world (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1). As such, struggles or competitive social positioning within social fields, involving the accrument and management of flows of social, capital, to reach for a better life, were linked to the social world. This study's findings, opens and extends our understanding of these flows of capital, the struggle to reach for a better life by emphasising the dynamics of a social-ecological world or space, where groups strategically managed their economic, cultural and social-ecological capital. Can we understand social-ecological capital as an extension of Bourdieu's (1986) social capital? Where social-ecological capital refers to the resources availed through human and human and non-human relations. In this thesis there is evidence to suggest that we can do so. Examples of this evidence are a) HFG1's attendance to their close social community bonds and their reinforcement of their community's particular ecological embeddedness in their 'First Beach', Hout Bay (Box

4.2). In this instance 'First Beach' can be viewed as ecological capital, where such capital concerns the HFG1's ecological status or investment in Hout Bay; b) IYFG1 and 2's Xhosa definition which concerns ethnic and ecological dwelling relations (see Sections 7.2.2, 7.2.3), where the extent to which they dwell or have Xhosa human and non-human relations can be regarded as an expression of ecological capital; and c) similarly with respect of the Valley groups, their rural-countryside-village definition (and the extent to which their human-non-human relations reflect this character) is an expression of their ecological capital (or status) (see Sections 7.2.2, 7.2.3).

This ecological perspective enables a more comprehensive interpretation of focus groups' particularities and differences, in respect of their pursuit of the good life. Further discussion preferences the term ecological, rather than social-ecological, to refer to the social and ecological embeddedness and relations of groups.

7.3.2 Key factors shaping group ecological identity

The second supporting research question asks: what are the key factors that have shaped group ecological identity? Six key factors (or themes), within an ecological dwelling perspective, emerge, namely, a) tacit definitions of environment and nature (and ecology), b) shared early formative environment, c) being of a particular ecological group or community, d) being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful, e) pursuit of the good life, and f) a sense of ecological risk. The aforementioned key factors are discussed below with attention drawn to similarities and differences between the focus groups and how these factors influenced groups' ecological identity constructions. The first factor (a) has been discussed in response to the preceding research question and is therefore not repeated here (see Section 7.3.1).

Central to the discussion of shared early formative environment (factor b) and being of a particular ecological group or community (factor c), as key factors shaping group ecological identity, are notions of traditional and modern communities. These notions draw

on perspectives presented by Bauman (2001, 2004) and Giddens (1990, 1991). In such contexts, traditional refers to ways people exist, embedded in local contexts, in trustworthy, known, intimate social networks of significance. These take place where people were born and/or grew up, and whose lives tend to be closely tied to the human and non-human environment through, for example, agricultural or fishing practices. Modern refers to people being increasingly disembedded and distanced from their early formative local environments and their early community relations; where trust is under review and dwelling is amidst greater uncertainty; yet where there is also greater opportunity for self determination. Focus groups' constructions show that traditional and/or modern were also about the premise on which they perceived themselves to be ecologically empowered in their embeddedness within the environment. Examples include empowerment in their ecological relations as Cape Coloured, Hout Bay Harbour community, White liberal, rural-countryside-village community or Xhosa.

- *Shared early formative environment*

Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' early formative environments were about their respective communities' homes. Even though their belonging to such homes was continually interpreted, especially at present, there was a sense of a core notion of what those homes meant that was grounded in early formative experiences as community members (see Section 7.2.2).

Home, Woodward (2002) and Taylor (2010) recognise, is significant in people's identity constructions (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2). Even though they tend to speak of individuals, this study's findings place a much greater emphasis on notions of groups and communities. The construction of ecological identity in respect of these communities' homes gave them a rootedness, a deep, particular sense of belonging. However, around this persistent, apparently more stable notion of home, present experience and perspective of the past needed to be coherently interwoven. This was a fundamental issue in these groups' ecological identity constructions, although, in different ways. For the

Harbour groups, home was becoming so transformed, as to threaten their traditional community's embeddedness there and consequently their efforts to maintain and retain their traditional ecological identity construction of themselves. For the Imizamo Yethu groups, their Xhosa home appeared to becoming less relevant to the next generations' interpretations of themselves (IYFG1) and home was increasingly at odds with who they were and lived with in practice (IYFG1 and 2). Imizamo Yethu groups found that their migration to Hout Bay, its meaning and how they belonged there, had unanticipated consequences to their inherent Xhosa ecological being and identity and their efforts to broaden that identity in present day South Africa. The evidence suggests that Valley groups choose and make their homes in the present tense. The sense of belonging and place in respect of being and experiencing rural-countryside-village was mobile, opportunistic. However, this was not so in respect of their liberal ecological identity which they found needed to be redefined in present day South Africa. Nevertheless, all groups constructions do underpin their construction of environment (and themselves), namely, as a relational, malleable, ever unfolding interpretation.

Does Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* offer a critical way of further interpreting the significance of these community home environments? *Habitus* emphasises that how groups existed in practice and in turn who they were was especially informed by their early experiences of their environmental homes. Such a concept resonates with the experiences narrated by groups in this study. Moreover, as will be discussed in the next section on the pursuit of the good life, these groups' *habitus*' as formed in these early home environments continued to be significant in their ecological experience in present day Hout Bay.

The positive persistence of early contributions to *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) appears evident in the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' constructions. For example, Harbour groups still regard themselves as fisherpeople of Hout Bay whether they fish or not (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2, Part c); and Imizamo Yethu groups regard themselves

as Xhosa's traditionally from the Transkei (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, Parts a, c). In contrast, at a group level, this persistence in Valley groups' constructions was imperceptible (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, Parts a, c). It was possible that individual participants' also had early formative experiences of rural-countryside-village which persisted. However, the evidence was scant, at best implied, and the case of young Zara (VFG2) for whom Hout Bay was an important early formative environment, went against such suggestions, as she valued Hout Bay's peace and the busier urban Cape Town (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2, Part a).

Imizamo Yethu and Harbour groups' narratives arguably also convey what Berger and Luckmann call 'intersubjective sedimentation' (1991: 85-87). In this context, sedimentation is the accumulation of a small amount of the 'totality' of their biographical experiences in their consciousness that is recalled as memorable and recognisable of who they are, including the meaning of their experiences of their ecological relations. When several people share a 'common biography' (1991: 85), Berger and Luckmann contend, their experiences become part of their 'common stock of knowledge' (1991: 86). Through the socially reiterated objectification of their shared experience, this knowledge separates from the original context, and is transmitted between generations. This is evident in the apparent pools of shared community knowledge, grounded in original experiences in their former home environments that these groups drew upon in the construction of their narratives. Examples include the stories about First Beach (Box 4.2), marine relations (see Boxes 4.3; 4.4) and Xhosa ways of being (see Boxes 6.2; 6.3; 6.5). Notably in the telling and re-telling of their group story/ies focus groups re-experienced their biography in the present.

All groups presented themselves as striving for a good life regardless of their relations with early formative environments. In the South African context, this pursuit is complexly about an increasingly modern environment of progress and political, human-rights based freedoms (see Chapters 1 and 2).

As such, these groups' constructions of their meaningful environments were presented on the basis of geographical *and* social definition.

- *Being of a particular ecological group or community*

An important part of how groups embed themselves within the environment was their construction of themselves as particular ecological communities. This was essentially presented on the basis of a) ethnic identity and b) traditional and modern ecological relations (see Section 7.2.3).

Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity was an important and positively presented social and ecological way of organising how groups defined (or knew) themselves. There were direct linkages between ethnic identity and meaningful places with regard to the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups. This is more complicated in respect of the Valley groups' ecological identity construction. The findings suggest their ecological identity was implicit within the ethnic social identity constructions; and in so doing this group claimed *their* constructions on *their terms* as opposed to politically imposed identities. Valley participants, presented themselves as socially and ecologically creative and mobile in their choice to define and dwell as rural-countryside-village – and they did this as individuals rather than as a group. However the similarity between individuals ultimately meant that this ecological definition was an expression of their group; even if their group was more individual than social in character (especially when compared to the other groups). There were exceptions, as highlighted in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, notably the two young Valley participants who presented themselves as of rural-village-countryside and also as urban. Valley groups' broad presentation of themselves as liberal Whites, qualified their ethnic identity in respect of their ecological liberal definition.

For all community groups, being ecologically moral was constructed as inherent in their social-ecological identities. To be Xhosa, for example, was to be ecologically moral, to

know how to dwell 'friendly', respectfully, correctly within ecological relations. However, Valley groups' constructions went beyond construction of nature as a moral standard of how to dwell and ethnic identity constructions. For them, being liberal and part of a liberal society was an ecological moral marker concerning how all people should dwell in a liberal society. For all groups, a key construct of being ecologically moral (and conversely immoral) was evident in constructions of being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled – about knowing how to be within and of environment. Nevertheless, there was also an expectation from Imizamo Yethu groups that other people should similarly dwell ecologically morally. A similar imperative from the Harbour groups was that others should be morally respectful of their unique ecological relations and embeddedness.

Traditional and modern ecological relations

A significant part of how the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu focus groups knew themselves and their surroundings was as traditional communities. This was especially evident in their presentation of themselves as part of closely bonded communities with intimate ties to their early formative community home environments. Notably, the Harbour groups specified a particular geographic locale, namely, Hout Bay, while the Imizamo Yethu groups specified a wider, provincial (political) and culturally/tribally defined locale, namely, the Transkei/Eastern Cape, as their home. As communities in these environments, they similarly presented themselves as closely bonded socially, ecologically knowledgeable and skilled and in intimate, deeply meaningful relationships with their non-human, living and non-living environment. These relationships arose through direct and indirect experiences and their discovered meaning formed a critical part of how and who they defined themselves ecologically. Harbour participants continued to claim to be involved in this relationship, directly or indirectly, as biographically tied to their community. Imizamo Yethu groups also did, however this was presently problematic for them, in respect of the lack of importance thereof as perceived by their children. Furthermore, it was significant that Imizamo Yethu groups presented themselves as Xhosa everywhere – in their identity constructions and sense of belonging to meaningful place able to imagine and reconnect

to their home wherever they were. As such, these groups' constructions of their meaningful environments were presented on the basis of geographical *and* social definition in a traditional sense. Moreover, whilst the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups presented themselves traditionally on the one hand, on the other hand, they noted that they experienced themselves and their surrounds in a changing, modern and democratic context (this is discussed in greater detail, in the following sub-sections, 'Pursuit of the good life' and 'A sense of ecological risk' as well as Section 7.3.3).

In contrast, the Valley groups presented themselves as a modern community. Their constructions inferred a broader, loosely bonded, more individual, mobile and ecologically creative community. Moreover, Valley groups tended to focus on their present and future rather than past ecological relations. A pattern of similar individual relations was evident – where participants were disembedded and distanced from their early formative environments and in a process of re-embedding, disembedding and re-embedding in their mobility. Furthermore, Valley groups placed a great emphasis on being and experiencing liberal ecological relations, together with that of their valued openness and intimacy of the rural-countryside-village environment, rather than on the particular geographically defined locale, Hout Bay. Even so, individual VFG1 participants such as Lynne and VFG2 presented Hout Bay as their present, meaningful home (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Part a).

- *Being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful*

Fundamental to groups' moral ecological dwelling, and thus central to ecological identity constructions of the groups, was the positive construct of being ecologically knowledgeable and skilful. For all groups, such knowledge and skill was gained by their direct perceptual dwelling engagement within ecological relations - from fishing to collecting wood in the forest to driving around and observing one's surroundings. Groups did however differ in the extent to which they defined themselves as ecologically knowledgeable and skilful. This was linked to their constructions of themselves as

particular ecological communities, embedded in particular ways and engaging in particular ecological dwelling practices. For the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu communities, this was presented as implicit in the ethnic identities expressed in their traditional and modern dwelling. Yet for the Valley groups, essentially already a modern, mobile, individual community, this was constructed as part of being ecologically liberal. Moreover there was an expectation of how all people in a liberal society should engage, that is, as ecologically knowledgeable and skilful and responsible (see Section 7.2.4).

As clearly evidenced in the focus group sessions, common to all groups was their knowledge and skill in constructing stories of who they were as community groups, often resourcing stories in wider circulation within their communities and/or broader society (see Section 7.2.4).

- *Pursuit of the good life*

A good life in an 'Age of Hope'

The notion of the 'good life' has been associated with recent lifestyle migration studies. O'Reilly and Benson (2009), for example, speak of affluent British migrants who move to France in their search of a different and 'better way of life' or the 'good life'. In a similar manner, Valley community focus groups appeared to have sufficient affluence to choose where and how to live. I have also used the 'good life' phrase because it resonates with the second term of democratic government, what former President Mbeki (2006) referred to as an 'Age of Hope' – around the time when the focus groups sessions were conducted. This was an age, Mbeki (2006) declared in his State of the Nation Address, drawing on evidence in public surveys (Roberts, Wa Kivulu & Davids, 2010), where South Africans, regardless of race, felt that the necessary social-economic conditions had been created to enable them to more rapidly advance towards the 'realisation of their dreams'. Drawing on the findings of Imagine Hout Bay (Envirochild.com, 2004) presented in Chapter 1 and this study's findings, there is evidence that Hout Bay communities do hope, do dream in just this way. As Linda, in IYFG2, declared, 'Nelson Mandela, or, Heaven'

(Box 6.5: Line 2087); where Nelson Mandela can be said to represent the hope of South Africa's democratic commitment.

Drawing on the ecological perspective that emerged from the findings, I contend that this hope is social and ecological, and is inherent in the constructions by groups of their pursuit of their good life in Hout Bay – their hopes, uncertainty and disappointment. This meaning extends beyond the broad South African democratic promise of socially (including economic and political aspects) empowering all people. It's about groups' ecological embeddedness and their empowerment within tangled webs of emotionally significantly perceived human and non-human relations. The findings also suggest that empowerment is a relative term and, by extension, so is groups' perception of the good life although there might be shared aspects. How people desire to be empowered, what they wish to experience and how they wish to be socially and ecologically defined through that experience was central to groups' pursuit of the good life. Groups' presentations of their good life was more particular, more local and more about their ecological experience of daily life than the wider concerns of democratic principles as for example enshrined in South Africa's Constitution (Chapter 1). This suggests that a key part of ecological identity, at a group level, concerns taking charge of who they want to be, how they wish to be embedded in the environment and their active pursuit of that goal.

Part of the good life, as suggested by O'Reilly and Benson (2009) and Roberts *et al.* (2010) observations, was about having the financial resources to support a desired lifestyle and/or being attracted by economic opportunity as a means to realising a good life. The focus group participant selection criteria did not specifically select for socio-economic characteristics. However a range of socio-economic statuses were revealed between different communities' focus groups (see Chapters 4-6, Sections 4.2.2, 5.2.2, 6.2.2). Based on reported income, Valley community groups were most affluent and participants in the Imizamo Yethu and Harbour groups significantly less well off (see Appendix 5, Figure A5.4).

A well known argument in environmental and social studies is grounded in the psychologist Maslow's (1957) hierarchy of needs, as a basis for understanding what motivates human behaviour. Often, as in the case of Oelfose's (1994) Hout Bay community conflict study, perceived negative social-environmental values and/or behaviour are attributable, at least in part, to the focus of poorer communities (and individuals) on the basic requirements for food, shelter and safety; while altruistic, positive social-environmental values and/or behaviour are attributable to the need for social or self actualisation of more affluent communities (and individuals), made possible by their other more essential needs having been met (see Chapter 1).

From a comparable perspective, African historians Beinart and McGregor (2003) assert that historical accounts of environmental history have tended to present Africans as spoiling the environment through need. This is contrasted with constructions of Africa as unspoilt wilderness (Beinart, 2000). Beinart and McGregor (2003) argue that a review of this history finds that much of the environmental damage occurred through colonial intervention while African rural societies, even when under stress, had a traditionally and intimately constructive and often beneficial relationship with nature. In effect, they tended not to cause harm or engage in risky behaviour despite their survival needs.

Despite the variance in economic prosperity all community focus groups valued the environment and felt that their everyday dwelling experience therein was critical to how they defined themselves ecologically (see Sections 7.2.1-7.2.3, 7.2.5). Valley groups tended to be economically affluent and in search of altruistic goal of liberalism, as well as aesthetic and experiential choices of rural-countryside-village. Less affluent Imizamo Yethu groups moved to Hout Bay in search of social and economic prosperity, escaping the 'poverty' (Elizabeth – IYFG2) of the Transkei/Eastern Cape. At the same time Imizamo Yethu groups expressed a deep valuation of being ecologically Xhosa – being friendly to humans and non-humans everywhere (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, Parts a, c). Additionally IYFG1 stressed the importance of discovering, as children, how to be

ecologically Xhosa in their traditional community home, the Transkei (see Box 6.2). While Harbour groups who were generally less affluent, in terms of income, expressed an inherent and significant ecological embeddedness in Hout Bay.

This study's findings cannot be easily explained by Maslow's (1987) pyramid of needs. All groups, regardless of economic means, were committed to moral ecological being and dwelling – this was a fundamental part of their ecological definition. Harbour and Valley groups presented themselves as focused on doing no harm, even though VFG1 did admit they failed to stand up together for their environmental values (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2, Part b; Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Box 5.3). Both Imizamo Yethu groups noted they dwelt ecologically respectfully as Xhosas despite the un-Xhosa dwelling experiences they had in Hout Bay (for examples see Boxes 6.2 and 6.5, together with supporting accounts and discussion). Even so, IYFG1 noted that in the Transkei they were occasionally disrespectful of nature out of survival necessity and similarly so in Hout Bay – although this was further complicated by their perceived lack of commitment to their moral ecological being when surrounded by immoral ecological circumstances (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1, Part a).

The struggle for desired ecological positioning

As previously discussed, the pursuit of a good life is about who groups are, their beliefs and values. Can Bourdieu's (1977, 1986, 1990a) notions of *habitus* and on-going struggles to position oneself or group desirably, offer a meaningful way of interpreting groups' narrated pursuit of their good life, of their ecological empowerment and maintenance? In this study, where Bourdieu's conceptualisation of a competitive social space (1986, 1990a, 1990b) is expanded to that of an ecological space, such notions do reveal rich insights into the findings.

Unlike the more ecologically creative Valley groups, the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups ecologically define themselves and embed themselves in present day Hout Bay,

largely according to their historical or traditional practice, especially that informed by their early formative experiences of their community home environments (see Sections 7.2.2, 7.2.3). Nevertheless, they express a desire to creatively re-fashion their ecological identities and dwelling practice. This desire centres on their hopes of being part of South Africa's democratic commitment. In respect of HFG1 and 2, this was expressed as a desire to be and experience enhanced ecological positioning, through, for example, the formal recognition of their fishing practice and identity by the democratic government's quota process. On the other hand, changing internal community (HFG2) and external circumstances (HFG1 and 2) were viewed as forcing their ecological practice of being, their *habitus*, to alter, such that their claim to Hout Bay and as a fishing community was under scrutiny. By contrast, the Imizamo Yethu groups, IYFG1 in particular, through their mobility have begun, intentionally and unintentionally (and in ways that combine positive, negative and ambivalent perceptions), to modify their Xhosa *habitus* – and consequently their ecological identity construction. Valley groups continued to ecologically creatively exist and choose where to experience rural/countryside-village. Critically, Valley groups' interpretation of being White liberal was positively defined yet contentiously experienced. (See Sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.6)

In respect of all groups, one finds evidence of what Bourdieu describes as *habitus* becoming 'divided against itself' (1999a: 511) when people move into new fields. This includes evidence of a dynamic negotiation between groups' *habitus* and their reinforcing and ambivalent dwelling experiences of themselves and others. A key part of this was the perceptions of the rules and resources defining the ecological space of South Africa as having changed post apartheid with the advent of democracy. This reflects formal rules as outlined in South Africa's present Constitution (see Chapter 1) and informal, tacit rules inherent in being Xhosa (IYFG 1 and 2), being Cape Coloured Hout Bay Harbour community (HFG1 and 2) and being liberal (VFG1 and 2); it also encompasses expectations underpinning attendances to such rules. What is available to all groups to improve their ecological positioning, to bring them closer to their good life, was perceived

as having altered formally through democratic government and informally through everyday ecological relations.

- *A sense of ecological risk*

Groups perceived themselves to be ecologically empowered, pursuing a good life, as a positive risk. They also perceived themselves to be ecologically vulnerable, in unanticipated ways. Groups' pursuits of their particular good life were interpreted as risky in complex ways. Central to their perception of risk was their construction of risk as inherent in complexly intertwined social and ecological webs of existence, as Cape Coloureds of the Hout Bay Harbour, White liberals and Xhosas respectively, in a democratically governed South Africa. (A detailed discussion with supporting examples can be found in Section 7.2.6)

Changing ecological relations of groups impacted how they were embedded in their environment and vice versa; a consequence of this was the need to make sense of who they had been, were and wished to be. In effect, this occurs continuously as groups evaluate their ecological relations through daily activity. However, fundamental changes in ecological relations, to who they are, has effectively shifted groups from known and more certain interactions to unknown and less certain interactions, where risk was inherent. Essentially belonging was as much about safety, security, certainty and groups particularities as it was about the evaluation of ecological risk.

Good and bad risk

Lupton's (1999) review of modernist meanings of risk argues that one way risk is viewed is as a 'neutral' concept where the probability of something happening was associated with varying magnitudes of loss and gain, for example, as evaluated in gambling. Drawing on anthropologist Douglas' (1994) 'risk and blame' analysis, Lupton (1999) asserts that risk could be finely distinguished as 'good' and 'bad'. In this study the questions are a)

whether groups' constructions of risk reveal such fine distinctions? and b) what insight this offers in respect of ecological identity construction?

The findings illustrate that groups' evaluations of 'good' risk underpinned their pursuit of their good life, which was of desirable, positively attributed, new and/or enhanced ecological constructions and reconstructions of themselves. It was, for example, a calculated, strategically evaluated risk to leave the safety, warmth and traditional certainty of the Transkei embedded Xhosa community home environment for the different environment of Hout Bay and the envisioned good life opportunities it held. Of greater significance than the individual and/or family choice mentioned by participants was their related construction of a group position, that is, they considered this choice to be a shared characteristic of group members of the Xhosa Imizamo Yethu community. That their reach of a good life was facilitated by democratic rule, understood as an active part of South Africa's democratic commitment, was viewed as a 'good' risk.

Similarly, the migration aspirations expressed in the Valley groups were underpinned by an evaluation of 'good' risk, that is, they hoped to gain in experience and ecological identity construction by leaving their urban environment for a rural/countryside-village environment such as Hout Bay. Notably, their construction of being liberal and White did not involve a physical migration but a repositioning of themselves in a democratically governed social and ecological space, in contrast to the more constrained apartheid governed space. Being liberal in this new space was about been able to stand-up for one's environmental values (VFG1) and/or be a part of liberal relations with a diversity of social groups, engaged in moral ecological relations (VFG2). Liberal ecological being was viewed as 'good' risk, inherent in being a dynamic part of South Africa's democratic commitment.

Harbour groups presented their community home environment of Hout Bay as a good life – there was little sense of a migration imperative. It was hoped that their continued

dwelling there would be enhanced by opportunities facilitated by democratic rule. Living in democratically governed South Africa, as such, was fundamentally viewed as a 'good' risk. Like the Valley groups, they strove or desired to reposition themselves in a new social and ecological space.

'Bad' risk appears to be more a complicated construction than 'good' risk. The findings suggest that it was about the contrast between groups' hopes and everyday dwelling experiences of South Africa's democratic commitment. In effect, all groups presented this commitment as an experience of 'good' and 'bad' risk. Hout Bay was both about their good life and their 'not so good' life. The new social and ecological space that democratic governing had facilitated was experienced as heightening the risk to groups' familiar and desired ecological identities. For HFG1 and 2, it was about hope and their contrasting experience of becoming socially and ecologically distanced and disempowered in their traditional home environment by those who had come to Hout Bay and did not respect their unique embeddedness; for HFG2 this included certain Harbour community members whose social practices put their community at social and ecological risk.

VFG1 and 2 were disconcerted and uncertain as to how to be socially and ecologically White and liberal in a 'liberal society' in contrast to being White and liberal during the apartheid era. In both forms of societies, they were fearful, but for different reasons. During the apartheid era, as VFG1 claims, it was a fear grounded in resistant, alternative views, yet at the same time being privileged, with much to lose. During the democratic era, VFG1 asserted that they remained a product of their history, which limited their capacity to enjoy the present freedoms in their social and ecological relations. For VFG2, it was similarly about being a product of their history, and their present day fear of been seen by other groups as not liberal in a 'liberal society'. VFG1 and 2, essentially claimed that being a White liberal was a desired way of being with 'good risk' as well as risky in a 'bad risk' way in South Africa's democratic society.

For IYFG1 and 2, South Africa's democratic commitment, was about their hopes of reaching for the good life with 'good' risk and their experience of 'bad' risk arising from their dwelling with a diversity of people, particularly non-Xhosas. IYFG1 and 2 felt that this experience meant they lived in social and ecological relationships often *other* to their Xhosa relations; IYFG2 however did not see themselves as also part of this 'bad' risk, while IYFG1 did. This was seen as an irony of South Africa's democratic commitment and their search of their good life. Furthermore, IYFG1 also claimed that government, as an institution mandated to deliver on the promises of the constitution, were also part of the 'bad' risk in their failure to adequately do so. Additionally, contrary to the social emphasis of the constitution and democratic government, IYFG1 presented an intertwined social and ecological emphasis; this emphasis was similarly inferred by IYFG2.

All these contrasts were deeply about what groups defined themselves as ecologically – in the past, present and imagined future. The findings indicate that 'good' and 'bad' risk were an important reflexively considered part of ecological identity construction and everyday dwelling experiences by groups. This consideration drove identity construction positively, but also threatened it with fracturing, incoherency and displacement.

Risk as 'forensic resource'

For all groups, risk was constructed as inherent in the activity within webs of social and ecological relations. This notion, coupled with groups' presentation of themselves as ecologically moral or of having moral intent, set the scene for their strategic construction of risk as a 'forensic resource' (Douglas, 1990). Douglas (1990, 1994) argues that risk functions as a forensic resource, a means of demarcating same from other. This was evident in all groups' moral ecological constructions about how to dwell and how not to; what is right and wrong – socially and ecologically. Douglas (1990, 1994) asserts that communities were forward looking in their perception of risk, to what danger may come to pass. This view was signposted with dangers, especially around what were seen as critical choices. Communities present certain behaviours as dangerous to their

community, their way of life and I contend drawing on the findings of this study by, their ecological being and relations. Such behaviour would be condemned, as indeed the focus groups did. Examples include: VFG2's, Story 2b (Box 5.5) narration of immoral ecological behaviour by uneducated people in Imizamo Yethu and by some Hout Bay visitors; and IYFG1's, Story 1c (Box 6.3) narration of those who were un-Xhosa, ecologically immoral in their dwelling in Imizamo Yethu. A 'climate of disapproval' (Douglas, 1994: 27) emerges based on the notion that to be at risk was,

"equivalent to being sinned against" (Douglas, 1994: 28),

leaving the community vulnerable. As such, she asserts to be sinful was perceived as being the cause of harm and vice versa. This informs the basis for determining who was and is likely to be regarded as sinful. Moreover, with the exception of HFG1 and IYFG2, groups at times, reflexively, determined that they too were sinful, dwelling in practice contrary to their signposts of what is sinful (Douglas, 1994).

This study's findings suggest, that ecological risk is conceptualised in complicated, multifaceted and reflexive ways. It is about who groups are in respect of their embeddedness in the environment, how they belong, including their engagement in and experiences of ecological relations. Stories of risk are intertwined with groups past, present and anticipated futures. As such, risk was part of groups' identity coherency, their on-going identity project.

7.3.3 Becoming ecologically modern and democratic

The third supporting research questions asks: in the new South African political circumstance, how are groups maintaining and/or redefining themselves in respect of the environment? Significantly, groups' presented experience of modernity intersects their experience of South Africa's democratic rule. Like many South Africans, they too are seeking to define and redefine who they are within South Africa's democratic commitment

(see Chapter 1). Most evidently this is expressed by groups' pursuit of a good life in an 'Age of Hope' (Mbeki, 2006).

Being modern as defined by modernity theorists such as Giddens (1990, 1991), Beck (1994), and arguably Bauman (2001, 2004) is about disembedding, disconnecting from local traditional contexts of life, living amidst uncertainty and ultimately risk. People are reflexively seeking new ways of defining themselves, where identity choices are a double edged sword – one side offering the security and warmth of community which is offset by having less freedom, the other the freedom of individuality but being at greater risk (Giddens, 1990, 1991; Bauman, 2004). The challenge of being modern and democratic, in South Africa, is evident in the different groups' experiences of dramatic changes in social relations, including, with other groups and institutions, as well as fundamental changes in their ecological embeddedness, including their ecological relations. Notably, groups' identity constructions were concerned with how they experienced themselves and others in these social-ecological relations.

As discussed previously, risk was a part of groups' experiences and identity constructions in modern, democratically governed South Africa – including their pursuit of a good life. HFG1 and IYFG2, unlike the other focus groups, did not reflexively consider themselves as part of the risk that arose within complex layers of ecological relations (see Section 7.2.6); HFG1's did however reflexively present themselves as uncertain as to their traditional ways of being and their relationship with South Africa's democratically framed constitution (see Section 7.2.6). Groups' narratives reflected a tension between their fresh ways of 'imagining' themselves (Nuttall & Michael, 2000) and the persistence of their former ecological definitions (embeddedness). As such, these groups' identities were not as fluid as modern identities are often considered.

Ethnicity has historically been a fundamental way in which South Africans define themselves and know others (see Chapters 1 and 2). Democratic rule has facilitated an

increasingly multicultural (racial/ethnic) society. Orkin and Jowell (2006) argue that local attitudes are still in transition, where there is evidence of the persistence of past racial attitudes and some evidence of a 'differentiation of attitudes' (2006: 294). The question then arises as to whether the findings suggest that past identity constructs, especially expressions of race (Alexander, 2006) persist in present day constructions, or whether as Seekings and Nattrass (2005) note, groups have an interest in defining themselves on the basis of *class* which, although linked to race under apartheid government, is observed as increasingly associated with expressions of economic capital and enjoyment of multiracial/multicultural relations. Notably, in the literature cited, multiculturalism and/or multiracial is socially interpreted. The findings of the present study suggest that democratic principles and government, as experienced by the focus groups, have brought forth opportunities and risk in how communities experience and define themselves and others ecologically, beyond social relations and ethnic definitions. The findings suggest that groups seek to define themselves in similar, particular and often unintentionally contradictory ways – challenging deeply held and tacit constructs of who they are. Such ways go beyond the social basis of class to that of ecological positioning. With this in mind, the discussion now moves forward to a review of the findings in respect of how groups are defining themselves in respect of the environment (see research questions, Chapter 2).

- *New ways of being ecologically embedded and engaged*

Focus groups' constructions of their ecological identities suggest a dramatic everyday experience of themselves and diverse others, including democratic institutions, processes and interactions in Hout Bay. Many focus groups also declared that they sometimes found themselves dwelling in Hout Bay in ways that contradicted who they were – either because of internal group dynamics (HFG1, VFG1, IYFG1) or because of external relations (HFG1 and HFG2, VFG2, IYFG1 and 2). As the evidence illustrates, Cape Coloured Harbour groups (HFG1 and 2) asserted that they were trying to retain and maintain their ecological identity construction – as especially tied to Hout Bay; White

Valley groups (VFG1 and 2) continued to define themselves as liberals yet found this definition problematic in respect of their White ethnicity and the present day experience of themselves and the interpretation by those who were formerly oppressed under apartheid, in a liberal community; and Imizamo Yethu groups (IYFG1 and 2) found that their Xhosa identity and ways of ecological being was challenged by their everyday experience of dwelling in Imizamo Yethu. (For a detailed discussion and examples see Sections 7.2.5 and 7.2.6)

Additionally, fundamental ways of ecological existence, such as being Xhosa, White liberal or Cape Coloured Harbour, appear increasingly to be less about where communities were geographically from and more about their dynamic emotional interpretations of meaningful places, symbolic ecological definitions of themselves and consistent ecological practice of ecologically moral intent, knowledge and skills. The exception might be the Harbour groups, for whom community residence and meaning remained geographically tied to Hout Bay. Even so, both Harbour groups narrated that the meaning of Hout Bay, which was a fundamental part of their ecological identity construction was changing, such that they feared they would no longer belong there nor be able to claim to be of Hout Bay. Despite their migration from the Transkei to Hout Bay in pursuit of a good life, the Transkei as 'original' Xhosa community home (IYFG1, Story 1b, Box 6.2) retained its symbolic importance in the Imizamo Yethu groups' constructions of themselves as ecologically Xhosa. Valley groups lacked a group early formative environment, however, their ecological definition of being liberal was especially meaningful in the broader South African context and presented as a desirable way of engaging in Hout Bay – a 'liberal society' (VFG2, Story 2b, Box 5.5).

The recent Western conceptualisation of 'cosmopolitan' (Beck, 2006; Binnie, Holloway, Millington & Young, 2006) and 'emotional geographies' (Davidson, Bondi & Smith, 2005) provides food for thought in respect of this study's context and findings. These concepts speak of diverse, blurred, permeable and always in motion modern or post-modern

identities, where social everyday dwelling is amidst a plethora of diverse cultural influences including communities, information transfer and socio-economic flows. Identity construction is no longer about determining definitively who is same and who is other; nor is community identity necessarily defined by a particular geography (Davidson, Bondi & Smith, 2005). Douglas (1994: 15), drawing on Gellner's work about nations, asserts that when people engage in new social relations they require 'new concepts', 'new words', new ways of being including 'new loyalties'. As just discussed, part of these new ways of being are about risk, in particular, risk to groups' familiar ecological definitions of themselves and in pursuit of a good life in Hout Bay, risk inherent in opportunities to enhance and/or broaden their ecological definitions and risk that is inherent in complicated webs of ecological relations.

The aforementioned studies have tended to focus on Western and more modern societies. This study's findings suggest that despite being under intense consideration and reconsideration in view of new politically facilitated dwelling circumstances, groups' ecological identities are not as blurred, permeable or in motion as the former studies suggest identity generally is in modern times. Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups (and even Valley groups) have retained traditional ways of knowing themselves within their present day ecological identity constructions, despite their experience of new social and ecological diverse everyday relations. As discussed, different groups, however, are seeking to make sense of their ecological identities in view of these circumstances and the incongruencies that have arisen in their identity constructions and dwelling. Nevertheless as Douglas (1994) notes, new ways of defining and engaging in ecological relations are needed – something all groups explicitly and/or implicitly acknowledge in their ecological identity constructions.

From a different, and more African perspective, McGregor's (2003) study of the Tonga-speaking people in Zimbabwe, argues that Tonga's construction of their relationship with the Zambezi river is a reflection of identity politics. While her study emphasises the social,

one finds insights into ecological relationships and significances which resonate with this study's findings. The Tonga are a local people for whom this river was meaningful; they lost access to the river under colonialism. However McGregor (2003) contends that although their daily life and practice was displaced from the river, it remained critical in their identity construction. Their memories of their past relations with river persist, including their interpretation of themselves as 'river people'. Moreover, she notes this memory is more than nostalgia; it is mobilised in conflicts over access to resources and in defence of their identity rights.

These social and ecological politics were evident in HFG1 and 2 and IYFG1 (and by inference IYFG2) constructions, such as fisherpeople of Hout Bay (HFG1 and 2) and Xhosas of the Transkei/Eastern Cape (IYFG1 and 2). Valley groups did not emphasise their past or historical relations with non-humans, on a group basis. Even so, their identity claim of rural-countryside-village, liberal people can be regarded as a broad yet particular claim. However, defence thereof was 'apathetic' (VFG1) or constrained by uncertain and ambivalent interpretations of being liberal in a 'liberal society' (VFG1 and 2). Access to a rural-countryside-village resources of openness and intimacy were internally conflicted by development; groups tended to employ their ecological creativity, expanding the meaning of Hout Bay to that of home – sometimes ambiguously and uncertainly so (as in the case of several VFG1 participants and VFG2 as a group) or in the expressed intent to migrate to another rural-countryside-village environment (for example, Claire, VFG1 – Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1, Part a). (See also Sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 for a detailed discussion)

- *Group dynamics in the construction of group ecological identity*

In this study, the emphasis was clearly on groups' constructions of their ecological identities. In these constructions, during the sessions focus groups tended to blur self in response to the demands of social group and group membership; discourses were about what was and wasn't part of the group. The exceptions were the groups' responses to spirituality and environment (Topic 4), where positions of social selves were evident.

Additionally, Valley groups tended to favour social self constructions but were also able to construct broad and significant group positions. This provided insight into the extent to which participants considered themselves part of the groups' wider community discourse.

Groups' ecological identity discourses initially appeared to be bound by ethnic stereotypes typically associated with colonial and apartheid rule (see Chapter 1). Such interpretations are consistent with expanded Social Identity Theory (SIT/SCT) which posits that as social entities, groups strive to present themselves positively, where groups are favourably attributed and members experience a positive sense of esteem through their membership (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1). However, the groups' discourses indicate that, in this context, their stereotypes' were more complicated than SIT/SCT has typically suggested. In particular, a) groups presented themselves as social-ecological entities, rather than merely social entities as per SIT; b) stereotypes appeared static in respect of familiar definitions – offering the security of the familiar – yet they were also dynamic, under re-interpretation and refinement; c) stereotypes were strategically and dynamically constructed, in tension between positive group attributes and everyday dwelling experiences – where groups presented themselves as positively, negatively and ambivalently ecologically attributed in a relational sense; and d) who groups were was about the social and ecological risk inherent in their ecological dwelling and belonging. Furthermore, constructions of ecological risk which served to demarcate what was same and similar (and acceptable as group) and what wasn't, were an unfolding conversation, framed by moral ecological intent and ecological knowledge and skilful dwelling. Stereotypes were also more personally, socially and ecologically emotional, in a group context, than often acknowledged. Who people were, as negotiated within groups, communities and the wider environment, was about historical ecological experiences, getting to know who they (and *other*) were from their dwelling experiences in a transformed ecological space, and imagined futures. This is possibly one of the reasons for the visibility of social selves in groups' constructions during the focus groups' sessions.

Clayton and Opotow argue that environmental identity contains a 'social component' whose influence is variable, but linked to cultural understandings of nature (2003: 9-10). Even so, as discussed in Chapter 2, Ingold (2000) disagrees with this cultural conceptualisation. As evidenced by this study's findings, ecological identities at a group level are social but not necessarily informed by pre-existing cultural interpretations of the environment. For the more traditional communities' groups with modern aspects, being of the Harbour community or Xhosa Imizamo Yethu community was inherently about ethnic social identity and ecological identity, while for the more modern Valley community groups' ethnic identity was not exclusive to their ecological identity. There was a sense of being social within an ecological space, where ecological identity was more broadly about the active experience and reflexive interpretation of everyday human and non-human relations. In such circumstances, meaning was, as Ingold (2000) claims, discovered through direct perceptual engagement within the environment, within intertwined social and social-non-human (ecological) relations. This includes the skilful dynamic co-construction of ecological knowledge, including risk, drawing on such experiences in a social context as discussed. It also encompasses historical past, early formative experiences of those relations, as in the case of the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu communities' focus groups. Such a concept of ecological identity also involves dwelling as per *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a, 1990b, 1999) and resourcing of past, present and imagined dwelling futures in the construction of identity. To be Xhosa or Cape Coloured Harbour, for example were ways of being, inherent in dwelling practice, rather than a pre-determined cultural notion, despite political directions. To be liberal, was a choice about how to exist ecologically, how to belong ecologically, beyond ethnic White social identity but in the particular case of the Valley groups inclusive of their ethnic social identity.

This study's findings illustrate that meaning, far from been attached to the non-human environment in the making of place and place identity, place attachment and environmental identity, is instead dynamically discovered and reflexively interpreted in groups' social and ecological engagement within the environment. This conclusion also

has a strong bearing on how groups imagine or desire themselves to be and belong. Though Ingold's (2000) work is based on traditional communities, the Hout Bay communities' focus groups with their traditional and/or modern character similarly indicates that people, their social and ecological relations continually unfold, as does the meaning of particular places and the environment as a whole. Identity and environment are therefore relational concepts. This is perhaps more evident in this study, where the study context is one in which identity politics have historically dominated and where at present identities are in crises – open to new ways and new experiences and requiring groups to actively and consciously conduct identity work.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored three communities' constructions of their ecological identities. Supporting research questions focused on groups' interpretations of environment and key factors that influenced identity ecological construction and how groups were seeking to ecologically define themselves in respect of the new South African political circumstance. The analytical emphasis was on group rather than self. The South African context, in which the Harbour, Valley and Imizamo Yethu groups dwelt, was evident in Hout Bay with its different ethnic and socio-economic communities which are largely socially and spatially distinct, consistent with apartheid rule, yet also experiencing their everyday environment differently under democratic rule.

A fundamental finding of this study was that groups, in all their social diversity, considered themselves to be inherently part of the environment, as a condition of existence, together with non-human, natural environmental entities and processes. With regard to the ways in which they were particularly embedded (or orientated within), they also considered themselves to be actively and sensually engaged in complex webs of social and ecological relations through which meaning was actively discovered and reflexively interpreted. Environment was also about groups' hopes (dreams) and attitudes as imagined and actively interpreted in the course of everyday social and ecological

relations. I have referred to this as an ecological perspective; VFG1 and 2's interpretations of ecology further supported this perspective.

Part of this perspective was the strategic construction of nature — a term groups tended not to use in preference of the term environment. This in itself indicated their perception of nature and of themselves, typically and tacitly in the course of everyday dwelling, as part of environment and their ecological relations in which they were involved. It could also suggest the consideration of themselves as of nature, an essential characteristic of their existence. Being in the environment was inherent in HFG1 and 2 and IYFG1 and 2 group constructions of themselves as members of their particular respective communities.

Did groups identify with nature, as is often claimed (for example: Thomashow, 1996; Clayton & Opatow, 2003)? I argue that the evidence suggests that these groups tended not to emphasise themselves as the same as nature but rather that nature and they were an inherent and actively engaged part of their ecological space and existence within the environment. Nature was strategically constructed as being about groups' moral ecological dwelling intention and part of ecological risk. At least one group constructed a tension between humankind and nature, where humankind was presented as frail and nature as a superior, ultimate way of existence to be pursued. For all groups, being ecologically moral was also presented as deeply connected to being ecologically knowledgeable and skilled, where ecological encompasses the social. To be immoral might simply reflect the interpreted character of others behaviour. However, this was often also linked to a perception of such others as uneducated, of not knowing how to be within and of environment.

This is different to several other interpretations in the literature which either emphasise the social world (for example, Bourdieu, 1977, 1990a, 1990b; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Abrams, 1988) or which refer to wider human and non-human communities in which for example people identify with the non-human world to varying extents, often with a moral

emphasis (for example, Clayton & Opotow, 2003). Such a difference reflects these focus groups' perception of being immersed within a human and non-human environment, actively engaged in webs of intertwined social and ecological relations, through which meaning of who they are and what is environment emerges, rather than being pre-assigned, by for example culture. In this, the findings are similar to the dwelling perspective of Ingold (2000) who posits that meaning emerges through direct perceptual engagement and discovery within the environment rather than pre-assigned cultural meaning (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2). Ingold's (2000) work draws on traditional communities dwelling, whereas this study draws on a range of traditional and modern and democratically governed communities. The Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups indicated that they remained deeply connected to their traditional dwelling and the Valley groups' constructions indicated they were modern, mobile and ecologically creative in their dwelling. However, all three communities' focus groups were also reinterpreting themselves and the surrounding environment in light of their recent everyday experiences of modern and democratic governed dwelling.

Such interpretation resourced past, present and imagined future ways of being in and of environment, as groups who were members of particular communities. Early formative community home environments were especially emotionally significant in constructions of the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups in terms of their ecological identity: who they were, the meaning of environment (especially significant places) and how they dwelt in practice. However, resourcing of the past did not appear evident on a group basis with respect to the findings from the Valley focus groups. I contended that this absence was likely due to the individualistic character of these groups and their mobility which had notably distanced them from their early formative community environment/s. This may have contributed to the broader definition of themselves, in contrast to the more specific definitions constructed by the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups.

It is significant that the ecological relations that informed groups' experiences and interpretations of meaningful places within the environment were not socially, physically or geographically bounded. The exceptions were the Harbour focus groups whose constructions emphasised their unique embeddedness in Hout Bay as critical to who they were socially and ecologically. The Imizamo Yethu groups defined themselves as Xhosa; although traditionally of their community and community home, the Transkei/Eastern Cape, they considered themselves Xhosa everywhere and in other particular webs of ecological relations. In this sense, the Xhosa ecological identity, although constructed with reference to a specific place and practices, was highly mobile. This was similarly so for the Valley groups, who considered themselves to be rural-countryside-village and liberal.

Ethnic social identities were important in constructions of ecological identities. It was important in respect of groups' claims to belong to meaningful places and the many meanings attributed to those places. The findings suggest that for the Harbour and Xhosa groups, social was part of the wider ecological experiences and interpretations, implying that typical and politicised ways of knowing group ethnic identity were socially constraining. In contrast, the Valley groups defined themselves implicitly and explicitly as White (ethnic group) and broadly as liberal, defined as an intertwined social and ecological construct not limited to any specific ethnic membership. I argue that this difference could in part be a consequence of the Valley groups' desire to distance themselves from past political interpretations and ways of engagement and highlight their commitment to being part of South Africa's more recent broad and diverse, democratically governed society.

The Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' ecological identity constructions also illuminated that in the course of their dwelling practice, symbolic interpretations of particular aspects of the environment and of group emerged – where places of meaning emerged. Examples included First Beach as an everyday social and ecological engagement and as a symbol of the unique embeddedness of the Harbour community in Hout Bay; and the Transkei as

a Xhosa home, the place where they engaged socially and ecologically as traditional Xhosa community and symbolically the place of Xhosa – where Xhosa's belonged. Interestingly, for the Valley groups, Hout Bay was about rural-countryside-village as well as liberal dwelling practice and experience, where Hout Bay had become symbolic of a liberal society, of South Africa's recent democratic commitment. A key part of this difference between the Valley and other groups rests on the emphasis Valley groups placed on the interpretation of their present dwelling, as home in a stream of other possible past homes. In contrast, the other groups' constructions emphasised the importance of their community home environment, namely, their early formative environments.

Another key construction was the presentation by all groups of themselves as directly perceptually engaged within the environment. This was about sensual interaction in which knowledge was skilfully discovered and communicated. However, what came into particular focus was how groups orientated themselves within the environment. As mentioned, in this context, this was either on the basis, of ethnicity or rural-countryside-village and liberal (White) principles. If one considers that ethnicity in respect of the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups encompasses social and ecological interpretations, then differences between them and the Valley groups are diminished.

As has been shown, groups skilfully constructed stories of who they were and their environment and these constructions underscored their valuation of this type of knowledge, and also their resourcing of stories in wider circulation within their communities. However, as in the case of one Valley group, an unfamiliar community story of ecological local knowledge was constructed and shared – an important insight into a more individualistic community. A legitimisation process characterised the construction of this unfamiliar story, turning it into a group story which also reflected group dynamics involved in the construction of ecological identity. This legitimisation process critically drew on knowledge that had been directly perceptually acquired as well as, in part, some

technical and lay knowledge. Imizamo Yethu groups also drew attention to the difference between (and tension about) the relative importance of their direct perceptually acquired knowledge as Xhosas and formal school education, which was also valued as a means to enhancing their families and ultimately community's reach for a better life. Ecological knowledgeable and skilful dwelling can be said to be about all the groups' particular empowerment within the environment. It was also the basis for determining their moral ecological being and who and what was ecologically immoral.

Drawing and expanding on the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1986, 1990a, 1990b), the findings can be interpreted as these groups' perception of themselves as embedded in an ecological space – encompassing, Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a, 1990b) classic social space. Groups' ecological identity constructions and interpretations of environment, present themselves as struggling within this space to realise their desired good life or to position themselves in ecologically desirably ways. This ecological space was perceived as undergoing a process of transformation facilitated by the intersection of modernity and South Africa's democratic commitment. Progress and politics have presented new ways of engaging and politically wider access to this space for all. However, the findings illustrate that this has social and ecological consequences. Additionally, groups' expectations of their good life and interpretations of South Africa's democratic government (and Constitution (1996)) were inseparably social *and* ecological.

Groups' pursuit of their good lives, regardless of socio-economic well-being or lack thereof, was framed by their moral intent and their ecologically knowledgeable and skilful dwelling. Being 'of environment' was about their ecological self actualisation. Even though dwelling practice did not always reflect the moral intent of groups, they continued to be committed to this intent. In part, such shortcomings arose from unanticipated experiences of modernity and South Africa's democratic rule, with respect to their everyday dwelling, from rubbish collection services, to multiethnic/liberal society dwelling, to lack of provision of water and sanitation.

In pursuit of their good lives, the groups differed in respect of the persistence of the influence of their experience of their early formative community environments in their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990b). The Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups' current ecological definition and embeddedness in Hout Bay was strongly influenced by their traditional *habitus* grounded in their communities' early formative environments. The Valley groups, by contrast, were ecologically creative in their *habitus* and distanced from their community's early formative environments. However, all groups desired to creatively re-fashion their ecological identities and dwelling practice within South Africa's transforming ecological space. For the Harbour and Imizamo Yethu groups this was about enhanced ecological positioning, rather than a fundamental change to who they were and how their particular dwelling practice. However, due to circumstances within their community membership (HFG1 and IYFG1), as a consequence of migrating to reach for a good life (IYFG1 and 2), plus circumstances perceived to be beyond their influence (HFG1, HFG2 and IYFG1 and 2), the familiar ways in which they dwelt was changing. For the Valley groups, this was part of a mobile history of reaching for a good life.

Across all groups, the evidence was that groups' *habitus* was becoming 'divided against itself' (Bourdieu, 1999a: 511). Who they were, how they belonged, in practice was consistent and conflicted. Group identities and experiences of their environment, including other humans, institutions and non-human relations were a composite of positive, negative and ambivalent. Central to this was their perception that the rules of socially and ecologically respectful engagement within the transforming ecological space had changed and were continuing to change, with few rules on how the new space would be re-fashioned.

Groups constructed risk as inherent in their ecological relations. It was constructed as emerging from complicated sequences, involving humans and non-humans, of cause and effect. Such ecological risk was a part of groups reach for their good life. In this context, risk was viewed as good and bad. Good risk was about calculated risk in reaching for the

good life, bad risk was complexly about good and bad risk, and essentially about harmful, often unanticipated consequences to groups and their meaningful environments (and places therein). Some groups reflexively considered their communities to be part of the risk to themselves while others did not explicitly present this - although they were uneasy and uncertain with respect to ecological risks. Risk was also constructed as a means of determining who and what was other. This was underpinned by groups' particular yet broadly similar moral dwelling intent and expectation in their ecological relations. To be a risky group, or risky institutional practice, was about the perception of being ecologically immoral and/or uneducated. This suggests that at some level, the groups, regardless of social and ecological differences, share similar expectations about social-ecological engagement in their everyday dwelling – of themselves and of *others* including government and industries. This was socially expressed, even though risk was perceived as human and non-human, arising from the activity within complicated, interconnected webs of ecological relations.

The findings also suggest that regardless of socio-economic statuses, all groups were concerned with moral ecological being within the environment. As discussed, this was also a key part of their ecological identity construction (and in respect of who and what was *other*). As such, the findings indicate that the arguments that environmental destructive behaviour is a consequence of the way different socio-economic communities balance survival versus self esteem needs are oversimplified (see Maslow, 1987; Beinart & McGregor, 2003). Indeed, the findings suggest that ecological relations and associated behaviour is complex, non-linear and deeply about ecological group – involving positive, negative and ambivalent interpretations and experiences.

Groups were socially-ecologically optimistic and presented themselves positively yet also with elements of conflict, negativity and uncertainty. The groups' everyday, current, dynamic and morally intentioned practice of ecological dwelling, and their on-going, relational interpretation of themselves and their environment, were about the pursuit of

positive definitions and experiences. These tended to be expressed in complicated stereotypes: a) social-ecological, b) a composite of the familiar and dynamically unfamiliar, c) at different times positive, negative and ambivalent, d) inherently risky in construction and practice, and e) morally, strategically employed to ecologically define what and who was other. Even though groups were dynamically pursuing their identity projects, they were not entirely the agents of their own stories. A significant part of this related to aspects of ecological risk, beyond their influence. Who groups were, how they belonged, was about the ways they were meaningfully and particularly connected to complicated, multifaceted and dynamic social-ecological webs, in practice and reflexively; it was about how from an ecological perspective they were embedded within the environment. Social selves were evident in groups' constructions, largely, I contend, because of the new and imagined ways in which groups were experiencing their environment and getting to know and redefine themselves.

Is everyone or every group conceivably environmentalist, as in valuing the environment? I argue, that in respect of groups' presentations of themselves as part of environment, as ecologically of environment and meaningful place, this is an inescapable condition of existence. Group ecological identity is an on-going process, concerning moral ecological being and interpretations of experiences of ecological relations; it is about how groups are and how they desire to positively ecologically present themselves within an ecological space and at the same time it is about their positive, negative and ambivalent experience of themselves and others – including their hopes. Nevertheless, one needs to be mindful of groups' social character. As illustrated by this study's findings groups social character including aspects of ethnic identity and social interaction remains an important way by which groups know themselves and engage socially and ecologically.

8. Concluding Comments

8.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a review of the extent to which this study's findings have relevance to the wider population and how the findings contribute to knowledge of ecological identity (Section 8.2). Issues of consistency, credibility and accuracy of the findings are also explored. Section 8.3 offers some reflections on the research choices made, the experiences of conducting the research and ethical considerations that emerged in practice. Section 8.4 considers the implications of the thesis findings for future research and Section 8.5 ends with a concluding comment.

8.2 The wider resonance of the key findings

Hout Bay as a study context is central to appreciating the value of this study's findings to understanding ecological identity. This section considers the extent to which the findings can be extended to a wider South African population and/or to other populations (see Lewis & Ritchie, 2003:268). It also comments on the findings in respect of possible wider inferences and theoretical resonance of concepts or principles (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Riessman, 2008); mindful of the need to appraise findings in terms of their 'wider resonance' (Mason, 2002: 195) with 'modest speculations' which focus on problems rather than statistics (Patton, 2002: 548).

In South Africa, as the last census in 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2003) indicates, the only common population demographic is that of diversity; with different provinces and municipalities having unique ethnic demographic compositions. The Western Cape province has its own diversity which uniquely involves the large presence of a Cape Coloured population. It is within this context of South African diversity and the uniqueness of the Western Cape, that Hout Bay's value as a study context and the particularities of the study's findings should be viewed.

Typical of qualitative and focus group method research, sampling was not representative in the sense of large random surveys. Sampling was purposeful and deliberately broad to facilitate recruitment of a range of comparable community members whilst pursuing equal gender representation and a range of age groups. Focus group sizes and compositions in the Valley focus groups varied unexpectedly due to last minute cancellations and recruitment. Therefore the groups should not be considered representative of the wider Hout Bay or Western Cape population.

Lewis and Ritchie refer to inferential generalisation as the extent to which findings can be inferred to 'other settings and contexts' (2003: 264). The choices informing Hout Bay as a rich potential study context reflect where the study's findings could have 'wider resonance' (Mason, 2002: 195). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Hout Bay was a valuable study context for several reasons. These, in brief, included its apparent geographical and social boundedness as an environment; its socio-economic diversity of communities experiencing one another in daily and close proximity in ways generally not previously possible in South Africa; its combination of a social sphere and a recognised biodiverse, unique physical sphere; a legacy illustrated in local community newspaper articles of a wider Hout Bay community environmental awareness and sensitivity; the experience of democracy and modernity reflected in dwelling in Hout Bay; and my own residential attachment to Hout Bay.

Although unique, Hout Bay reflects similar rural-urban situations in South Africa where diverse communities remain spatially separate yet are experiencing themselves and others in ways not possible before in everyday dwelling. This study's findings reveal the complexity of groups' ecological definition of themselves and *others* and of their experiences of and attitude to dwelling. Notably, the possibility exists, for example, that other groups or communities may regard themselves as only social entities living in an environment comprising only non-human entities.

This study's findings are particularly relevant in respect of the dynamics of social and economic development, modernity and democratic government in South Africa., There was never going to be a right time or a less sensitive time to conduct this study. Nonetheless, the crises of identity that South Africa's democratic governance together with influences of modernity experienced by communities in Hout Bay, offered a unique opportunity to gain insight into how groups were managing and reforming their ecological identities and experiences. The research focus and methodology revealed what was often deeply and tacitly known and usually difficult to access, namely, how groups orientate within the environment. It is these ecological definitions and interpreted experiences that have resonance, most especially to other communities and ecological settings in South Africa. In particular, the notion that groups perceive and experience themselves and other humans, institutions (including the Constitution (1996)) and non-humans *ecologically*; and that this has a profound effect on an ever-evolving interpretation with respect to their perception of democratic government and modernity.

This study found that groups defined themselves ecologically in the course of their daily dwelling practice, as embedded within a human and non-human environment. Such definitions of themselves and their environment were relational and continually and reflexively unfolded as groups made sense of themselves, their surroundings, their ecological relations including associated ecological risk. This study also found that it was difficult to determine where social definition ends and ecological definition begins. However, social and ecological identities were not interpreted as different facets of group identity but rather as inherent in the construction of group.

Such identities were also about complicated related stereotypes in which groups' favoured a positive definition of themselves, but also lived with deeply emotional, positive, negative and ambivalent experiences of themselves and others. This illustrates a complicated interpretation in respect of expanded social identity theory, especially with regards the a) strategic construction of in-group and out-group stereotypes and b) extent to which

participants as members of groups of particular Hout Bay communities, identify and continue to identify with their respective groups (Turner, 1999).

As discussed earlier and in Chapter 7, groups' ecological perspective, which was fundamental to their ecological identity constructions, contrasts the emphasis in the literature on the social world as the space in which people dwell and define themselves. It also contrasts the environmental (social and psychological) literature which emphasises people as social and identifying to varying degrees with nature, often with a moral emphasis. Nevertheless Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a, 1990b) notions of *habitus* and the competitive engagement of people, in a social space, resourcing their various capitals to realise their desired social positioning are relevant to this study's findings – not least because individuals and groups do engage socially within what this study defines as an ecological space. The evidence suggests that groups' interpretation of environment also expresses the basis on which they dwell in practice and as such their *habitus* as it is embodied in that everyday dwelling practice, their desires for a good life and their struggle to realise that good life.

Early formative environments are evidently critical to how more traditional groups in this study continue to define themselves and dwell; yet they are less significant on a group basis to more modern groups who instead are focused on present ecological interpretations and experiences. Ecological identity construction becomes caught in a multidimensional tension between how they define or desire to define themselves and their ecological experience of themselves and others. The findings further resonate with anthropologist Ingold's (2000) dwelling perspective, where the significance of environment is continually perceptually revealed through ecological engagement rather than pre-assigned cultural meanings. However the evidence does not go as far as to support Ingold's (2000) interpretation that humans and non-humans are ultimately all organisms living in an ecological space, that is, the environment. This implies a sense of biological equality and groups' constructions neither clearly convey this nor the extent to which the

non-human part of the environment, part of their ecological relations are considered same or different. Instead, going beyond Ingold's (2000) interpretation, this study makes clear that there is a moral ecological frame to ecological group identity and this framing informs how adherents should engage as groups and group members.

An additional finding was that risk was interpreted ecologically – arising through the activity within complicated, interconnected webs of ecological relations. Risk was part of their ecological identity construction and their positive, negative and ambivalent dwelling experience of themselves and others. This finding adds another dimension to the more social and Western interpretations of risk presented by Giddens (1990), Beck (1992, 1994) and Bauman (2004). Giddens' (1990, 1991) work focuses more on social selves, Beck (1994) on institutions and selves, and Bauman (2004) on social selves and groups. As Bauman (2004) notes groups are attractive because they offer warmth, familiarity and security of belonging with same people which is especially attractive in an ecologically uncertain, uncomfortable, risky modern and democratically governed South Africa. Nevertheless Bauman (2004) also posits that groups constrain the individuals' experiences and definitions - which may negatively impact the individual in a post modern society where rapid change and the need to adapt quickly is the norm. By way of contrast, this study suggests that, even in the case of the more individual, modern Valley community, groups favoured their group membership – even if broadly defined – because it offered a sense of stability (rather than Bauman's constraint). In other words, the group identity was seen, by those claiming it, as a means for actively managing dwelling pressures as part of an adaptation strategy.

Recently researchers associated with the South African University of Stellenbosch, Mbembe, Samuelson, Nuttall and Musila (2011) argued that the city of Cape Town with its 'living legacy' of 'North-South' and 'East-West' influences offers researchers a unique opportunity to 'rethink Africa', its diversity of people and their stories. They claim that investigating Cape Town as community offers a rich opportunity to gain insights into ways

of thinking about South Africa and Africa. There is other evidence that my choice to study Hout Bay (a particular part of the wider City of Cape Town) can and does have inferential and theoretical generalisation potential as well as practical utility. In September/October 2010, a notable number of Hout Bay Harbour community members were in conflict with the local municipality's intention to remove houses built in the firebreaks bordering the Harbour community residential area (on Hangberg mountain) and the nature reserve (MacLennan, 2010). This conflict illustrates the on-going urgency of understanding communities ecologically and appreciating the ramification of the particular social-ecological interpretation of South Africa's democratic commitment. This is similarly true regards the continued challenges of land reform in South Africa including land tenure security (for example, IOL, 2011; also see Appendix 7).

8.3 Reliability, validity, politics and ethics

As discussed in Chapter 3, the emphasis in this study was on narrative or situated truth rather than generalisation (Riessman, 2008: 185). As mentioned, Riessman (2008) considers reliability and validity under validity alone. What and how groups perceive themselves to ecologically be, and the interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences in searching for coherent meaning over time, is narratively real to them and has 'real' everyday consequences to how they engage ecologically. Additionally, while the constructionist perspective allows for many meanings, including contradictory meanings and reconstructions, groups did not present free fictions of themselves. In part, this was due to the dynamic legitimacy engagement of participants in groups comprising other members of their community, that is, a form of group evaluation. It was also evident in the consistency of constructions between groups from the same community.

Riessman (2008: 186) asserts that there are no 'formal rules' for narrative validation and calls for pragmatic appraisal with a view to realising transparency. Consistent with her suggestions I have attempted throughout the thesis to make explicit my methodological and method choices, interpretations and primary data (full transcripts) so that others can

confirm the trustworthiness of my work and where they can further build on it. The strength of this study lies in the detailed narrative analysis of the sessions' audio-recordings. I also draw attention to my own careful and methodical review of the emergent themes from the analysis and to their broad endorsement by peers. Additionally, although the study was interested in groups and the thematic content of their identity constructions, the analysis also paid attention to critical moments when social selves were evident. This adds to the trustworthiness of the group data analysis in that it exposes the constructive tensions between self and group allowing an evaluation of the extent to which constructions are of self and/or group.

A further consideration was the length of time over which the study was conducted, namely 2004 – 2005 (approximately a year and a half). This period was relatively brief with respect to the deep constructions and complexities of ecological belonging. Despite the short data collection time, because of the emphasis on narrative, the evidence draws upon the longer collective and individual experiences and histories of the communities involved.

My research experience has been one of an increasing realisation to keep in review the politics and ethics of this research. The range of ethical considerations included participants' confidentiality, safety and my research commitment to remain as close to the groups' constructions in documenting, analysis and representation as possible. A fine line had to be stepped between trying to let the voices of the groups be heard and keeping the revealing details of individual participants confidential. This was heightened in the context of the close Xhosa community of Imizamo Yethu and the close and small Harbour community. My interpretation of the data from various communities groups was also ethically constrained by my role as researcher and resident.

Given the already volatile nature of community relations (Chapter 1), I was increasingly concerned about the unintended and unforeseeable consequences the research process,

including participation and findings, could have on social-ecological relations within Hout Bay. Ecological relations and constructions of ecological identity were presented by groups as political, though rarely in terms of particular political parties. They were about the struggle for determination in South Africa and in the topics raised by the groups, this study becomes part of the political dynamic. I found that the constructions of ecological identity by groups were intricately linked to their moral ecological evaluations of right and wrong and past, present and imagined future ecological injustices. Ricoeur's (1990) notion of text becoming independent and open to constant reinterpretation relative to the reader/s is also pertinent here (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3). In this respect I am acutely aware that the detailed transcripts may lead to a static interpretation by others of the groups participating in the research. Such an interpretation from outside could fail to acknowledge crises of identity and that constructions are ever evolving and always, to greater and lesser extents, under evaluation. Additionally, in my experience, moderating groups is ethically charged, not least because it challenges your implicit and explicit understandings, as a person and a researcher. Skilled techniques and judgement are required and are often only fine tuned in each research context.

The choices of language and sensitivity to context gained importance as the study progressed. From the outset, I appraised and reappraised the wording in my thesis. Even apparent mundane words such as 'simple', used in contrast to 'complex' and 'complicated' could potentially resonate with undesirable South African meanings. For example, simple implies ignorance which can be associated with the apartheid Bantu education philosophy and colonial-ethnic interpretations. Similarly, I considered the possible other inferences, in Hout Bay and wider South Africa, that the wording of my findings could have. An example is the use of '*other*' in defining how groups define themselves or their attributes as same and different. This term is widely used in the social identity literature, however, it has particular and negative racial-apartheid connotations in South Africa. In writing the thesis, I have had to contend with the challenges of academic style while remaining sensitive to the research field context. Groups' narratives and my interpretations of them are, in many

respects, defined in this thesis. Inevitably bound in paper and framed by a particular research authority.

Consistent with my views on transparency and desire for accuracy, I offered participants the option to review the transcripts of their group sessions. Only three such requests were made. Feedback, from the three who expressed an interest, was non committal, with a general comment that they found the reading interesting. Furthermore, some time after the sessions were conducted, several participants encountered me in public places in Hout Bay. They commented that the sessions were enlightening and made them think hard about who they are in the environment. This underscores the social experience of focus groups and their capacity to catalyse people to think more reflexively on tacit and sensitive subjects that may not come to the fore in everyday dwelling or situations and may be strategically avoided. However, it would also be remiss to overlook both the responsibility this brings to a researcher and also the desirability of using additional methodologies to capture how peoples' understanding changed over time.

8.4 Implications for future research

The research findings suggest that identity and environment research should be engaged in a wider research effort to better understand the nature of ecological identity of groups.

This study's findings raise many more questions than they resolve. These include: a) how social and ecological stereotypes function in relation to broad and particular environmental values, b) whether and how groups' ecological identity constructions work to make sense of their interpretations of intimate, local and salient experiences and more distant and imagined experiences of the environment; and to what extent these differing experiences combine to make groups feel they belong within certain environments and within a global world, and c) does ecological risk specifically attract individuals to particular groups as a means of managing ecological risk; is this on the basis of the inherent character of ecological risk or does it relate to particular risks which individuals and groups are more

attentive to or are so strategically; if so why and in what ways. It is also valuable to further explore the influence of groups' early formative community home environments (or lack thereof) in respect of their present constructions of themselves, belonging and dwelling – and even their dreams, their imagined desirable dwelling on a community or group basis.

In moving forward, four broad areas of potential research are proposed here, to better understand how diverse communities whose everyday dwelling is in practice connected are interpreting and re-interpreting and experiencing their belonging and their ecological identities. Future research could explore,

- whether there are differences in how younger community members perceive themselves ecologically, in contrast to older community members (and explore the extent to which generational redefinitions of themselves and their communities are underway);
- how younger age groups construct their ecological identities within and across diverse communities; this offers a potentially exciting and necessary insight into the changing dynamics within the ecological spaces that groups engage with and seek to define themselves within;
- gender differences in ecological identities, within and between communities. Apartheid rule privileged men above women - a situation which has shifted under democratic rule and as a consequence of economic and wider social trends (Giddens, 1990). Men and women have the opportunity to redefine themselves ecologically not only in respect of who they are, but also who they are in relation to one another.

In this study, despite morally framing their ecological identity constructions, groups reflexively constructed themselves in practice as dwelling ecologically morally and immorally – an experience which left them positive, negative and ambivalent about themselves at different times. Future research could,

- further explore groups' ecological moral interpretations with respect to identity and dwelling practice. Connected to this is the need to further explore groups' constructions of ecologically moral and immoral being and ecological risk. This could be explored on various group levels, such on an in-group and mixed group basis comprising participants from different communities. Also, groups could be defined according to the same community, and by sex and age group, in order to review the influence of age and gender. Comparisons and contrasts should also be made in respect of different socio-economic groups (beyond the ethnic identity relationship evident in South Africa) and in respect of groups from different rural-urban ecological dwelling contexts.

Moreover, although the emphasis is on groups, this study's findings illustrated the importance of *self* becoming evident in ecological identity constructions such as those of the Valley groups and in respect of all groups' participants responses to *spirituality and environment* (Topic 4). It would be productive to look across the various proposed research areas for points of significant tension between self and groups. Additionally, this study focused on in-groups; equally interesting is the extent to which in-groups and their construction becomes more salient or less salient in an inter-group context. The research findings also make clear that for some groups, their early experiences are central to their sense of identity.

As part of such further research, most especially that which crosses academic disciplines, the finding that groups' are social and ecological offers room for further exploration, not least, of other groups - such as other local communities. In particular it is of interest to investigate the character and extent of social and ecological dynamics in respect of how groups define and experience themselves and others. In my own professional work in development and environment policy it is evident that how people engage and define themselves – or not – ecologically, and the extent, if so, to which social definitions rather than ecological ones function, potentially offers deep insight into how policy can be more effective, more personal, more social, more ecological.

8.5 Conclusion

Ecological identity is central to how the Hout Bay groups define themselves. Groups share an ecological dwelling perspective within which they construct their particular ecological identity constructions. These constructions resource early formative dwelling experiences (and the lack thereof); they also resource ecologically moral and ethnic community constructions, ecological knowledge and skilled dwelling constructions, efforts to pursue a good life and desired identities, and ecological risk. Such constructions encompass social dimensions of groups. The findings suggest there are no clear boundaries between social and ecological constructions of group ecological identity. This does not preclude the possibility that there may be groups who only present themselves as social entities.

In developing these constructs, groups frequently draw on wider social and ecological stories in circulation within their communities and South Africa. Even though groups seek to define themselves positively, their expressed reality is one of an amalgam of positive, negative and ambivalent experiences of who they are in dwelling practice and also of who and what is other. As South Africa changes and democratic imperatives gather pace, the question of group (and individual) ecological identity becomes more pertinent to discussions of sense of place, and to the sense of belonging and community cohesion. Groups' ecological stories are a significant part of this, as evidenced by the continued attraction to a group identity despite the experience of political changes in South Africa, where individual self determinations might be more attractive. Indeed, the findings show that groups' identities are at risk from the interplay of social, economic and political forces. Nevertheless, the extent to which the stories and supporting constructions told by participants in this study will be told in the future, and whom, if anyone, will be listening, depends on many driving forces within webs of interconnected ecological relations. These include social, political and economic dynamics and more broadly ecological dynamics. While the influences and outcomes of these dynamics cannot be predicted with certainty and with any sense of completion, it is evident that ecological identity of these groups is key to knowing who they are in a changing and ecologically defined world.

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**APPENDIX
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